THE Freeman

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

SEPTEMBER 1963

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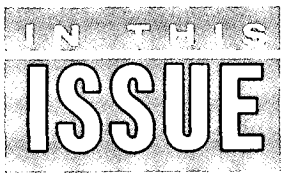

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THE Freeman

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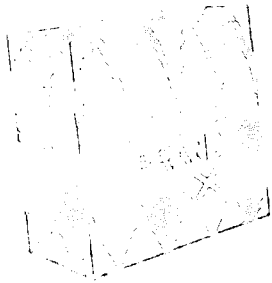

The Case for Economic Freedom

BENJAMIN A. ROGGE

MY ECONOMIC philosophy is here offered with full knowledge that it is *not* generally accepted as the right one. On the contrary, my brand of economics has now become *Brand X*, the one that is never selected as the whitest by the housewife, the one that is said to be slow acting, the one that contains no miracle ingredient. It loses nine times out of ten in the popularity polls run on Election Day, and, in most elections, it doesn't even present a candidate.

I shall identify my brand of economics as that of economic freedom, and I shall define economic freedom as that set of economic arrangements that would exist in a society in which the government's only function would be to prevent one man from using force or fraud against another – including within this, of course, the task of national defense. So that there can be no misunderstanding here, let me say that this is pure, uncompromising *laissez faire* economics. It is not the mixed economy; it is the unmixed economy.

I readily admit that I do not expect to see such an economy in my lifetime or in anyone's lifetime in the infinity of years ahead of us. I present it rather as the ideal we should strive for and should be disappointed in never fully attaining. Human society is *not* destroyed by men who have ideals but find that they cannot, in their imperfection, always attain them; rather it is destroyed by men who have no ideals, by men who have no benchmarks against which to measure their own performances.

The tragedy of the classical socialist is that he has false ideals; the threat to society of the modern liberal is that so often he has *no* ideals, no guides to con-

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duct, other than political expediency and a spurious realism. The man who insists that he will walk the middle of the road has his path determined for him by those who define the ditches, and never then takes a step of his own real choosing.

To put it another way: I am not frustrated by the fact that politicians often pass laws that do violence to the free market. I *am* frustrated by the fact that so many people do not *know* that violence has been done, that so few feel any sense of uneasiness at the departure from the ideal.

I am convinced that we continue to move away from the free market because few of the leaders of opinion even know or understand the ideal of the free market, because the ideal itself is no longer accepted as a basic guide to action. We drift toward socialism, not because we consciously wish to go there, but because we no longer know or care where our own home is.

How has this come about? Who has done us in? The fact is, of course, that we have done ourselves in. We have *not* been betrayed by subversives. We have been betrayed by our own indolence, by our preoccupation with profiting individually from the government interventions we deplore, by our failure to prepare and present the case for economic freedom as powerfully and persuasively as possible. The cure must start within each of us individually and not with programs to reform everyone else.

Where do we find the most powerful and persuasive case for economic freedom? I don't know; probably it hasn't been prepared yet, and each concerned person should work at it himself. Certainly it is unlikely that the case I present is the definitive one. However, it is the one that is persuasive with me, that leads me to my own deep commitment to the free market. I present it as grist for your own mill and not as the divinely inspired last word on the subject.

The Moral Case for Economic Freedom

You will note as I develop my case that I attach relatively little importance to the demonstrated efficiency of the free market system in promoting economic growth, in raising levels of living. In fact, my central thesis is that *the most important part of the case for economic freedom is not its vaunted efficiency as a system for organizing resources, not its dramatic success in promoting economic growth, but rather its consistency with certain fundamental moral principles of life itself.*

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I say, "the most important part of the case" for two reasons. First, the significance I attach to those moral principles would lead me to prefer the free enterprise system even if it were demonstrably less efficient than alternative systems, even if it were to produce a *slower* rate of economic growth than systems of central direction and control. Second, the great mass of the people of any country is never really going to understand the purely economic workings of *any* economic system, be it free enterprise or socialism. Hence, most people are going to judge an economic system by its consistency with their moral principles rather than by its purely scientific operating characteristics. If economic freedom survives in the years ahead, it will be only because a majority of the people accept its basic morality. The success of the system in bringing ever higher levels of living will be no more persuasive in the future than it has been in the past.

Let me illustrate: The doctrine of man held in general in nineteenth century America argued that each man was ultimately responsible for what happened to him, for his own salvation, both in the here and now and in the hereafter. Thus, whether a man prospered or failed in economic life was each man's individual responsibility: each man had a right to the rewards for success and, in the same sense, deserved the punishment that came with failure. It followed as well that it is explicitly immoral to use the power of government to take from one man to give to another, to legalize Robin Hood. This doctrine of man found its economic counterpart in the system of free enterprise and, hence, the system of free enterprise was accepted and respected by many who had no real understanding of its subtleties as a technique for organizing resources.

As this doctrine of man was replaced by one (largely reflecting Freudian psychology and sociology) which made of man a helpless victim of his subconscious and his environment – responsible for neither his successes nor his failures – the free enterprise system came to be rejected by many who still had no real understanding of its actual operating characteristics.

Basic Values Considered

Inasmuch as my own value systems and my own assumptions about human beings are so important to the case, I want to sketch them for you.

To begin with, the central value in my choice system is individual freedom. By freedom I mean ex-

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actly and only freedom from coercion by others. I do not mean the four freedoms of President Roosevelt, which are not freedoms at all, but only rhetorical devices to persuade people to give up some of their true freedom. In the Rogge system, each man must be free to do what is his duty as he defines it, so long as he does not use force against another.

Next, I believe each man to be ultimately responsible for what happens to him. True, he is influenced by his heredity, his environment, his subconscious, and by pure chance. But I insist that precisely what makes man man is his ability to rise above these influences, to change and determine his own destiny. If this be true, then, it follows that each of us is terribly and inevitably and forever responsible for everything he does. The answer to the question, "Who's to blame?" is always, "*Mea culpa,* I am."[1]

I believe as well that man is imperfect, now and forever. He is imperfect in his knowledge of the ultimate purpose of his life, imperfect in his choice of means to serve those purposes he does select, imperfect in the integrity with which he deals with himself and those around him, imperfect in his capacity to love his fellow man. If man is imperfect, then all of his constructs must be imperfect, and the choice is always among degrees and kinds of imperfection. The New Jerusalem is never going to be realized here on earth, and the man who insists that it is, is always lost unto freedom.

Moreover, man's imperfections are intensified as he acquires the power to coerce others; "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

This completes the listing of my assumptions, and it should be clear that the list does not constitute a total philosophy of life. Most importantly, it does not define what I believe the free man's *duty* to be, or more specifically, what I believe my own duty to be and the source of the charge to me. However important these questions, I do not consider them relevant to the choice of an economic system.

Here, then, are two sections of the case for economic freedom as I would construct it. The first section presents economic freedom as an ultimate end in itself and the second presents it as a means to the preservation of the noneconomic elements in total freedom.

Individual Freedom of Choice

The first section of the case is made in the stating of it, if one accepts the fundamental premise:

[1] See my "Who's To Blame?" in THE FREEMAN, January 1961.

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Major premise: Each man should be free to take whatever *action* he wishes, so long as he does not use force or fraud against another;

Minor premise: All economic behavior is "action" as identified above;

Conclusion: Each man should be free to take whatever action he wishes in his economic behavior, so long as he does not use force or fraud against another.

In other words, economic freedom is a part of total freedom; *if freedom is an end in itself, as our society has traditionally asserted it to be, then economic freedom is an end in itself, to be valued for itself alone and not just for its instrumental value in serving other goals.*

If this thesis be accepted, then there must always exist a tremendous presumption against each and every proposal for governmental limitation of economic freedom. What is wrong with a state system of compulsory social security? It denies to the individual his *freedom,* his right to choose what he will do with his own money resources. What is wrong with a governmentally enforced minimum wage? It denies to the employer and the employee their individual freedom, their individual rights to enter into any voluntary relationship not involving force or fraud. What is wrong with government-to-government foreign economic aid? It denies to the individual freedom to choose, as his conscience dictates, whether to send aid or not. What is wrong with a tariff or an import quota? It denies to the individual consumer his right to buy what he wishes, wherever he wishes.

It is breathtaking to think what this simple approach would do to the apparatus of state control at all levels of government. Strike from the books all legislation that denies economic freedom to any individual and three-fourths of all the activities now undertaken by government would be eliminated.

I am no dreamer of empty dreams and I do not expect that the day will ever come when this principle of economic freedom as a part of total freedom will be fully accepted and applied. Yet I am convinced that unless this principle is given some standing, unless at least those who examine proposals for each new regulation of the individual by government look on this loss of freedom as a "cost" of the proposed legislation, the chances of free enterprise surviving are small indeed. The would-be controller can always find reasons why it might seem "expedient" to control the individual; and unless slowed down by some general feeling that it is im-

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moral to do so, he will usually have his way.

Noneconomic Freedoms

So much for the first section of the case. Now for the second. The major premise here is the same, that is, the premise of the rightness of freedom. Here, though, the concern is with the noneconomic elements in total freedom — with freedom of speech, of religion, of the press, of personal behavior. My thesis is that these freedoms are not likely to be long preserved in a society that has denied economic freedom to its individual numbers.

Before developing this thesis, I wish to comment briefly on the importance of these noneconomic freedoms. I do so because we who are known as conservatives have often given too little attention to these freedoms or have even played a significant role in reducing them. The modern liberal is usually inconsistent in that he defends man's noneconomic freedoms, but is often quite indifferent to his economic freedom. The modern conservative is often inconsistent in that he defends man's economic freedom but is indifferent to his noneconomic freedoms. Why are there so few conservatives in the struggles over censorship, over denials of equality before the law for people of all races, over blue laws, and so on?

Why do we let the modern liberals dominate an organization such as the American Civil Liberties Union? The general purposes of this organization are completely consistent with, even necessary to, the truly free society. Its modern liberal leadership has led it to make mistakes but, in spite of those mistakes, I continue as a member of the organization. After all, it was the only organization to protest when Moise Tshombe was denied a visa to enter this country. It was the first organization to study the handling of General Walker in the Mississippi case, to see if his rights before the law were being denied. Undoubtedly there are leftists in the organization, but probably few more than in other groups with which I am involved, such as the American Economic Association, the Episcopal Church and, yes, the Republican Party.

Particularly in times of stress such as these, we must fight against the general pressure to curb the rights of individual human beings, even those whose ideas and actions we detest. Now is the time to remember the example of men such as David Ricardo, the London banker and economist of the Classical free market school in the first part of the last century. Born a Jew, turned

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Quaker, he devoted some part of his energy and his fortune to eliminating the legal discriminations against Catholics in the England of his day.

It is precisely because I believe these noneconomic freedoms to be so important that I believe economic freedom to be so important. The argument here could be drawn from the wisdom of the Bible and the statement that "where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also." Give me control over a man's economic actions, and hence over his means of survival, and except for a few occasional heroes, I'll promise to deliver to you men who think and write and behave as you want them to.

The case is not difficult to make for the fully-controlled economy, the true socialistic state. Milton Friedman, Professor of Economics, University of Chicago, in his new book, *Capitalism and Freedom,* takes the case of a socialist society that has a sincere desire to preserve freedom of the press. The first problem would be that there would be no "private" capital, no private fortunes that could be used to subsidize an antisocialist, procapitalist press. Hence, the socialist state would have to do it. However, the men and women undertaking the task would have to be released from the socialist labor pool and would have to be assured that they would never be discriminated against in employment opportunities in the socialist apparatus if they were to wish to change occupations later. Then these procapitalist members of the socialist society would have to go to other functionaries of the state to secure the buildings, the presses, the paper, the skilled and unskilled workmen, and all the other components of a working newspaper. Then they would face the problem of finding distribution outlets, either creating their own (a frightening task) or using the same ones used by the official socialist propaganda organs. Finally, where would they find readers? How many men and women would risk showing up at their state-controlled jobs carrying copies of the *Daily Capitalist*?

There are so many unlikely steps in this process that the assumption that true freedom of the press could be maintained in a socialist society is so unrealistic as to be ludicrous.

Partly Socialized though Largely Private Enterprise

Of course, we are not facing as yet a fully socialized America, but only one in which there is significant government intervention in a still predominantly private enterprise economy. Do these interventions pose any threat to the non-

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economic freedoms? I believe they do.

First of all, the total of coercive devices now available to any administration of either party at the national level is so great that true freedom to work actively against the current administration (whatever it might be) is seriously reduced. For example, farmers have become captives of the government in such a way that they are forced into political alignments that seriously reduce their ability to protest that of which they do not approve. The new trade bill, though right in the principle of free trade, gives to the President enormous power to reward his friends and punish his critics.

Secondly, the form of these interventions is such as to threaten seriously one of the real cornerstones of all freedoms – equality before the law. For example, farmers and trade union members are now encouraged and assisted in doing precisely that for which businessmen are sent to jail (i.e., acting collusively to manipulate prices). The blindfolded Goddess of Justice has been encouraged to peek and she now says, with the jurists of the ancient regime, "First tell me who you are and then I'll tell you what your rights are." A society in which such gross inequalities before the law are encouraged in economic life is not likely to be one which preserves the principle of equality before the law generally.

We could go on to many specific illustrations. For example, the government uses its legislated monopoly to carry the mails as a means for imposing a censorship on what people send to each other in a completely voluntary relationship. A man and a woman who exchange obscene letters may not be making productive use of their time, but their correspondence is certainly no business of the government. Or to take an example from another country, Winston Churchill, as a critic of the Chamberlain government, was not permitted one minute of radio time on the government-owned and monopolized broadcasting system in the period from 1936 to the outbreak of the war he was predicting in 1939.

Each Step Leads to Another

Every act of intervention in the economic life of its citizens gives to a government additional power to shape and control the attitudes, the writings, the behavior of those citizens. Every such act is another break in the dike protecting the integrity of the individual as a free man or woman.

The free market protects the integrity of the individual by pro-

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viding him with a host of decentralized alternatives rather than with one centralized opportunity. Even the known communist can readily find employment in capitalist America. The free market is politics-blind, religion-blind, and, yes, race-blind. Do you ask about the politics or the religion of the farmer who grew the potatoes you buy at the store? Do you ask about the color of the hands that helped produce the steel you use in your office building?

South Africa provides an interesting example of this. The South Africans, of course, provide a shocking picture of racial bigotry, shocking even to a country that has its own tragic race problems. South African law clearly separates the whites from the nonwhites. Orientals have traditionally been classed as nonwhites, but South African trade with Japan has become so important in the postwar period that the government of South Africa has declared the Japanese visitors to South Africa to be officially and legally "white." The free market is one of the really great forces making for tolerance and understanding among human beings. The controlled market gives man rein to express all those blind prejudices and intolerant beliefs to which he is forever subject.

Impersonality of the Market

To look at this another way: The free market is often said to be impersonal, and indeed it is. Rather than a vice, this is one of its great virtues. Because the relationships *are* substantially impersonal, they are not usually marked by bitter personal conflict. It is precisely because the labor union attempts to take the employment relationship *out* of the market place that bitter personal conflict so often marks union-management relationships. The intensely personal relationship is one that is civilized only by love, as between man and wife, and within the family. But man's capacity for love is severely limited by his imperfect nature. Far better, then, to economize on love, to reserve our dependence on it to those relationships where even our imperfect natures are capable of sustained action based on love. Far better, then, to build our economic system on largely impersonal relationships and on man's self-interest — a motive power with which he is generously supplied.

One need only study the history of such utopian experiments as our Indiana's New Harmony to realize that a social structure which ignores man's essential nature results in the dissension, conflict, disintegration, and dissolution of Robert Owen's New Har-

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mony or the absolutism of Father Rapp's Harmony.

The "vulgar calculus of the market place," as its critics have described it, is still the most humane way man has yet found for solving those questions of economic allocation and division which are ubiquitous in human society.

By what must seem fortunate coincidence, it is also the system most likely to produce the affluent society, to move mankind above an existence in which life is mean, nasty, brutish, and short. But, of course, this is *not* just coincidence. Under economic freedom, only man's destructive instincts are curbed by law. All of his creative instincts are released and freed to work those wonders of which free men are capable. In the controlled society only the creativity of the few at the top can be utilized, and much of this creativity must be expended in maintaining control and in fending off rivals. In the free society, the creativity of every man can be expressed – and surely by now we know that we cannot predict who will prove to be the most creative.

You may be puzzled, then, that I do not rest my case for economic freedom on its productive achievements; on its buildings, its houses, its automobiles, its bathtubs, its wonder drugs, its television sets, its sirloin steaks and green salads with Roquefort dressings. I neither feel within myself nor do I hear in the testimony of others any evidence that man's search for purpose, his longing for fulfillment, is in any significant way relieved by these accomplishments. I do not scorn these accomplishments nor do I worship them. Nor do I find in the lives of those who do worship them any evidence that they find ultimate peace and justification in their idols.

I rest my case rather on the consistency of the free market with man's essential nature, on the basic morality of its system of rewards and punishments, on the protection it gives to the integrity of the individual.

The free market cannot produce the perfect world, but it can create an environment in which each imperfect man may conduct his lifelong search for purpose in his own way, in which each day he may order his life according to his own imperfect vision of his destiny, suffering both the agonies of his errors and the sweet pleasure of his successes. This freedom is what it means to be a man; this is the God-head, if you wish.

I give you, then, the free market, the economic expression of man's freedom itself and the guarantor of all his other freedoms. ◈

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the Failures of Private Enterprise

MELVIN D. BARGER

THE FANTASTIC successes of the American free enterprise system and the dismal failures of socialism in the USSR, Red China, and elsewhere, should be familiar facts to anybody who reads. And it is probably the glittering productivity of the American business system that forces its domestic enemies to attempt their changes, not by openly advocating socialism, but by declaring themselves to be in favor of "preserving competition," "saving capitalism," or "protecting small business." Scarcely any Americans except a few splinter groups of eccentrics call themselves "socialists," for "socialism" won't sell under its own brand name. Free enterprise has been so successful that even its opposite has to be offered as a form of free enterprise!

Yet, there are thousands of business failures every year in the United States, to say nothing of costly mistakes made by companies which nonetheless manage to stay solvent. All of these failures are costly also in terms of human anguish. Nobody likes to talk about them; they are skeletons in the closet of American business. This is regrettable, for *the very failures of private enterprise are a powerful argument in favor of maintaining as much freedom as possible.* Failure has its rightful function in the free market place, and we ought never to suppose for a moment that failure is completely bad. It has some important uses which ought to be examined and talked about.

The very failures of private enterprise are a powerful argument in favor of maintaining as much freedom as possible.

Mr. Barger is a public relations representative in Jackson, Michigan.

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Three Case Studies

Here are three actual business failures that will serve as cases in point:

- Six years ago a giant automobile company risked over $200 million in the design, production, and promotion of a new car. In a short time it had to be taken off the market, leaving only an assortment of jokes and a badly disillusioned group of dealers;
- A small Michigan firm with a seasonal product diversified into the school seating business, which appeared extremely attractive and profitable during the early planning stages. Powerful competition and other forces finally caused them to liquidate the project, at a heavy cost;
- An electronics firm built a special plant for the production of gears under a government contract. Production costs in this unfamiliar business drove them to the wall, and only a fortunate sale of the plant and machinery saved the company from immediate insolvency.

Now these were personal tragedies for the persons directly involved. Investors suffered through losses in savings, suppliers were deprived of valuable customers, employees lost jobs, and executives were demoted or forced to resign. In view of the "wear and tear" that failure imposes on human feelings, it is tempting to demand relief measures of some kind. The dealers who risked their savings on the new car had nothing to do with the adverse market conditions that caused it to fail. The employees who were laid off because their company failed to make good in the school seating business were acting in good faith; they probably did their own work efficiently and well. And the small Midwestern community that had such high hopes for the electronics firm's gear business did not really deserve the blow that came when the plant closed. In all of these cases, the free market seemed to deal brutally with some rather innocent and decent people.

No Federal Aid: They Found Their Own Answers

It so happens that in the three cases cited, little provision *was* made to soften the impact of failure. These were industries that did *not* have some kind of a pipeline into public funds, so the business managers had to "eat their own mistakes." Except for unemployment payments to laid-off employees, everybody involved had to take the consequences of failure. *And the result, in each case, was that the managers took decisive and energetic steps to liquidate the failing operation as*

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rapidly as possible. They had to, in order to avoid disaster.

There was a happy sequel to each failure. The automobile company went on to enjoy some unexpected sales successes with a sports-type car and the soon-to-appear compacts. It was able to use many of the production facilities that had been assigned to the defunct model. The company that failed in the school seating business applied its energies more determinedly than ever in its own line, grateful that they had withdrawn from the ill-advised seating venture before losses became unendurably heavy. And the plant vacated by the unhappy electronics firm was purchased by a growing, well-financed company that has since expanded the facility and tripled employment.

Hence, it should be clear that although failure was undesirable, and resulted from somebody's mistaken judgment, the free market put a "stop loss" on it as quickly as possible, thus halting further drains on scarce capital and other resources. Market freedom is, in fact, practically indispensable in the handling of a business failure. Business managers have to be able to take action without delay, and in some cases the losses might be so great that any postponement at all will be fatal. There is also the chance that corrective measures might save the situation; here again, the manager needs the freedom to act promptly. A third reason, one that is often important to the workers and the community where the business is located, is that decisive action may eventually transfer the plant and equipment to more capable hands.

None of this should be interpreted to mean that failure is being glorified or is something particularly characteristic of the free enterprise system. It is only to say that the free market place has some built-in methods of dealing with failure that all other systems lack. Under any other system, failure continues to perpetuate itself, with hidden but nevertheless real losses to the entire community.

Controlled Failures

Now let us turn to the controlled market place and see what happens when failure occurs. Controlled businesses can be either those that are directly owned by the government, such as the Post Office, or those privately owned but regulated by a government agency. In either case, the "failure" mechanism is not allowed to perform its proper role. Failure happens, but it is "remedied" by doses of subsidy or by regulation that thwarts the called-for liquid-

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ation of a questionable operation. As more and more legislation is passed giving the government additional controls over the economy, it also becomes increasingly difficult to deal wisely with failure.

We are sadly familiar with the methods of handling failure in government-owned enterprises. The postal deficit is something that seems to get aired annually, and as all of us know, Congress always finds the funds to make it up. It is common knowledge that the Post Office has hundreds of operations around the country that probably fail to pay their own way, and that the rates for the various classes of mail have been decided by political considerations rather than economic ones. And it is politically impossible for Congress to make the hard decisions that the market place makes automatically for the privately-owned firm. Thus, rather than shut down certain services that are losing huge sums of money, the Post Office department allows the public to fool itself by paying through taxes for the services it does not pay for directly in postage. Some mail users also get huge benefits that everybody pays for, since not all people use the mails equally.

Were this same principle applied to every commodity and service that we buy, the result would be an over-all decrease in the amount and quality of these goods and services; for the incompetent suppliers would be kept in business along with those we would select under free market conditions.

Subsidized Subways

Another kind of government-owned industry that avoids the stigma of failure is the municipally-owned transportation system. A certain large North American city has a new subway system that is something of an engineering marvel in rapid transit. One is picked up in a beautiful new underground subway station and whisked to the heart of the city in cars that ride almost as smoothly as the latest jet aircraft.

To the uninformed, this rapid transit system is a dazzling success. Unfortunately, it is actually a dismal failure, for it was built by public funds and cannot pay its operating expenses out of its fares. Were it a privately-owned firm, it would already be in bankruptcy. But it is kept alive by subsidy, and the persons who use the system literally enjoy a free ride at everybody's expense. Nor is it possible to raise fares to cover the true cost of operation and perhaps give the taxpayers a "profit." Had this alternative been open, we must remember, it would

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have drawn private capital into the venture originally.

Regulated Rates

What happens when failure occurs in an industry that is privately owned but publicly regulated? One serious effect is that the owners are unable to liquidate their investment without some kind of permission from the authorities. If a radio station has been losing money, for example, the owners are forced to continue losing money until they can find a new buyer and the Federal Communications Commission approves of the license transfer – a procedure that may take months. If an airline has been losing money to such an extent that its management decides that the best alternative is a merger with a healthier concern, this near life-and-death matter for the company cannot be disposed of without governmental approval. If a railroad wishes to discontinue an unprofitable branch line or adjust its rates, it can do so only with permission from state or federal authorities. And in economic affairs, this matter of delay becomes a critical thing, for it means a continuance of the adverse conditions that made the proposed move necessary. In some cases it is as if a group of doctors held a lengthy conference and argued about a means of dealing with a situation while the patient bled to death.

Government's practice of rescuing ailing industries with a subsidy or some other favor is also highly questionable. As we know, this is often undertaken for humanitarian reasons, and the public is sometimes moved to pity those unemployed as a result of the failure. Farm subsidies often are advocated on the grounds that the "small farmer must be saved," although we seldom learn just how many small farmers actually are saved by the subsidy program and why it is so necessary to "save" the small farmer rather than let the free market guide him into new methods or into some other work.

Unemployed Miners

Lately, the depression in the coal mining industry has also bedeviled the nation's conscience, and one national weekly news magazine featured a particularly touching and pathetic cover story on the troubles of an unemployed Kentucky miner. Such a story almost moves one to demand that Congress scrap the capitol dome, if necessary, to get the unemployed miners back to work. It seems pompous and hardhearted to ask why the coal industry is languishing and if it will ever make a comeback. And if the gov-

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ernment adjusts its own purchasing practices to create more uses for coal, as has been suggested, does this create unemployment in another extractive industry and also saddle the government with a less efficient fuel?

It's hard to find an answer to the coal miners' problems, but a safe assumption is that it lies in the direction of more market freedom rather than less. For their problem is that coal failed in the market place when placed in competition with gas and oil. Meanwhile, mine operators chose to mechanize rather than pay the wage rates demanded by the miners. Any subsidy for the coal industry or the distressed coal towns is simply a government attempt to repudiate, through its powers of taxation, the decisions the users of coal have been making about it for some time.

Thus we see that governments cannot really prevent failure; they can only mask it or use their power to force the rest of society to subsidize certain parts of it. While this is ostensibly humanitarian, the long run effects must be a slowing down of progress and continuous unemployment, along with demands for further subsidies in the form of public works and the like. Allowing failures to eliminate or to correct themselves as efficiently as possible is one of the most important functions of the free market.

Businesses fail because among other things they cannot hold their costs in line and retain the allegiance of their customers. Let the responsibility for learning how to succeed remain with the managers of the failing businesses. The grim alternative is an economy where nobody fails and nobody succeeds – but everybody stagnates. ◈

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THERE IS A TIME in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.

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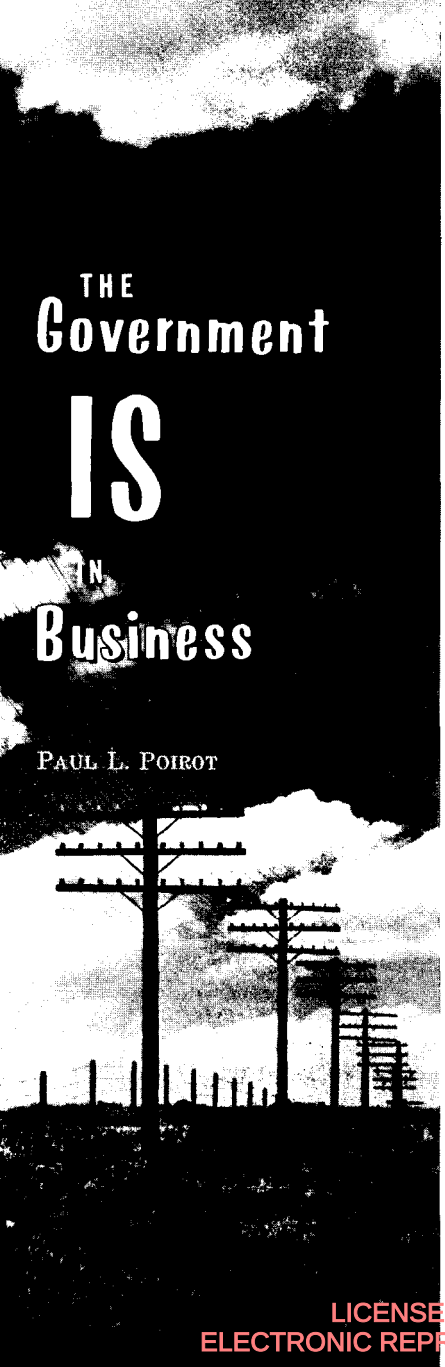

IF YOU, as a property owner, have occasion to negotiate with an electric company concerning a right-of-way across your lands for its transmission lines, you may want to take some lessons in bargaining from the nation's largest landlord, the federal government.

For many years, the government has exercised considerable control over the activities and operations of the privately-owned electric companies. And out of its interest in flood control, conservation, national defense, and miscellaneous matters, it has developed an enormous power-generating and distribution network in various parts, if not quite all, of the United States. Obviously, any proposed extension of lines or services by any privately-owned electric company might turn out to be "in conflict with the power marketing program of the United States." So, that is one of the dangers guarded against in new regulations issued March 23, 1963, by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture relative to rights-of-way for power transmission lines across federally-owned lands: *No right-of-way is to be granted for electric facilities which the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture may deem to be in conflict with the power marketing program of the United States.*

Illustration: A. Devaney, Inc., New York

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Furthermore, applicants for rights-of-way for electric lines across public lands must agree to allow the federal government to use any of what the government decides may be "excess" capacity of the line. And the government would have the right, at its expense, to increase the line's capacity and to use such increase for its own purposes, thus jeopardizing any reserve for future expansion that the line's owner might have intended.

Naturally, the privately-owned electric companies are perturbed about the stringency of these new regulations. Even the most casual witness of the extension of the "TVA Yardstick" since the first inch was granted in 1933 must realize by now that the "power marketing program of the United States" has no natural limits, that it is designed to encompass every square foot and every citizen of the country, and that those in charge must deem to be in conflict with their program any and every privately-owned electric generating and distributing facility in the land. The federal government already has pulled tight the noose of its monopoly over the electric power industry in the TVA territory. When and where its next foreclosure will come is debatable, but the definite trend of the times and mood of the electorate is in that direction. The timing is strictly a matter of political expediency.

REA in Practice

Slightly more than a quarter of a century ago, when the Rural Electrification Administration was under debate in Congress, Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas sought to reassure the nations' private electric power industry: "May I say to the gentlemen that we are not in this Bill intending to compete with anybody. By this Bill we hope to bring electricity to the people who do not now have it. This Bill was not written on the theory that we were going to punish somebody or parallel their lines or enter into competition with them."

Contrary to Mr. Rayburn's solemn and sincere assurances of 1936, the growing REA giant is reaching out to serve not only rural customers but industrial and suburban markets as well. Five out of six new REA co-op customers, in fact, are now commercial, industrial, or nonfarm consumers. And tax funds are being loaned through REA at less than cost to finance lumber plants, housing projects, and, in one case, snow-machines for a ski resort.

The recent regulations governing rights-of-way across federal lands mark perhaps the most ex-

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treme, abusive, and arrogant grab for power yet attempted in a major movement toward socialization of the electric power industry of the United States. This latest step cannot be described as a new break in the principles of private ownership, voluntary exchange, or limited government – those principles were long since fractured and abandoned in this particular struggle; what we witness now is more like a final lunge or death blow to competitive private enterprise.

How Limit Government When Principles Are Abandoned?

One of the proper functions of a government of limited powers is to protect the rights of citizens to life and property – as long as each lives and uses his property peacefully and without injury to others – and to constrain those who might attempt such injury. But when the government itself acquires the ownership of land or any other property, who then is to constrain the government in its injurious use of such property? The principle of limited government is thus abandoned whenever the government claims title to land. It is abandoned whenever the government takes the first step toward building a hydroelectric dam or power-generating plant or transmission line. Indeed, it is abandoned whenever the government undertakes to set the rates and otherwise regulate the operations of privately-owned electric companies. So, there are no fundamental libertarian principles left upon which one can then make a firm stand when the federal power agency takes its next logical step – such as posing impossible conditions for rights-of-way across federal lands. Why should anyone be particularly concerned at that late stage?

This is no gross exaggeration or wild prediction of something that might possibly happen in the United States many years hence. The monopolization of the electric power industry under government ownership and control already has happened, in our time, before our very eyes, just as it has happened before in other lines of business activity, and as it will continue to happen if citizens of the United States are willing to abandon the basic principles of private ownership and control of property, voluntary exchange, personal responsibility, and limited government.

Nor is "the power marketing program of the United States" by any means limited to an interest in the production and transmission of electrical energy. Federal and state taxation, regulation, and control of the production, importation, pricing, transmission, and

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marketing of oil and gas is a burdensome fact familiar to all. And few persons have even bothered to doubt the propriety of what amounts to a government monopoly of the budding business in atomic energy. There are indeed many facets to "the power marketing program of the United States"; and there are numerous examples in other fields to show the nature of the trend.

Communications and Transport

Everyone knows that it is now illegal to undertake any operation in conflict with "the communications program of the United States." The government monopoly of the postal service is complete. Government control of the airwaves is absolute; there is no opportunity for a strictly private and independent system of radio or television communication. The so-called private telephone companies are franchised, regulated, and controlled. Most magazines could be put out of business tomorrow at the whim of the Postmaster General. And even the newspapers can be shut down whenever the government chooses to look the other way as union leaders flaunt the special privileges inherent in labor legislation.

A similar pattern toward government monopoly is emerging in "the transportation program of the United States." It has been a long series of steps from the first post roads as provided in the Constitution to the expanding, federally subsidized and controlled system of interstate highways. And federal interest in mass urban transportation is the latest major development. Meanwhile, we have a heavily subsidized merchant marine for overseas transportation, as well as a government program for rivers and harbors and canals and other inland water transport. The railroads have paid dearly and still pay for those early land grants along their rights-of-way through the underdeveloped government lands of a struggling young nation. Passenger and freight rates are strictly regulated; proposed mergers or abandonment of lines carefully scrutinized and often forbidden; railroad properties and services mercilessly taxed by every unit of government from the federal on down to the level of the local school district; wages and hours and working rules featherbedded under a blanket of governmental sanction – all of which comes very close to the same thing as absolute ownership and control by government. As for air transport, the only part of the business not directly operated or heavily subsidized by government is strictly regulated as to routes, rates, records, reports,

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romance, and routine. Little wonder that Americans find it so difficult to imagine a transportation service to the moon unless the government provides it!

Another clear example of government monopoly is in "the monetary and credit program of the United States." The Constitutional authorization "to coin money" and "regulate the value thereof" has been twisted through central banking, fractional reserves, and deficit financing into an engine of inflation that persistently grinds away the value of private savings, builds minor cyclical business fluctuations into major disastrous depressions, and threatens to destroy the credit of the United States among the nations of the world. Money and credit, instead of serving as a lubricant to facilitate trade, have been monopolized by the government into a combination brake-accelerator that regulates and controls and frustrates the will of consumers and the activities of businessmen who would try to serve them.

Agriculture and Labor

Less clear, perhaps, in its monopoly characteristics but at an advanced stage, nonetheless, is "the agricultural production and marketing program of the United States." Individuals are no longer free to produce and sell such crops as tobacco, cotton, peanuts, or wheat in competition with the government program. Many wheat growers are to be commended for their courageous stand in the recent wheat referendum. But, there is no way to reconcile the principles of freedom with a political process whereby the past producers of a given commodity, *and no others among the taxpayers of a nation,* are privileged to vote whether to accept heavier subsidies and more stringent control or smaller subsidies and less control. Freedom in agriculture means *no* subsidy and *no* government control of agricultural production and marketing, no matter how many persons vote otherwise.

"The labor marketing program of the United States" is not yet a tight monopoly; some persons are still free to work for anyone offering a job opportunity at a wage rate mutually acceptable. But in this area, too, the trend is unmistakable. Under government legislated and sanctioned compulsory unionism, one job classification after another is withdrawn from the free market, held for union members only, withheld from other individuals qualified to perform the work satisfactorily. And more and more of the types of employment still open to non-union workers are being covered

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by minimum wage laws which block out those least productive workers incapable of earning the legal minimum wage. Government unemployment compensation and social security programs and tax policies make idleness more attractive, often more remunerative, than creative effort. And all of these government subsidized and enforced fringe benefit items cut from the wage, leaving less and less of the total open to free bargaining between employer and employee.

Freedom in Jeopardy

While the foregoing examples by no means exhaust the list of goods and services that have been brought partially or wholly under government monopoly in the United States, they should suffice to illustrate to anyone concerned that economic freedom is seriously threatened; that one advance toward the welfare state leads inexorably to the next step; that the proponents of government regulation and control of creative activities are in deadly earnest; and that once allowed in principle, there is no logical stopping of compulsory intervention until the government owns and controls not only all the property in a given industry but also all the people dependent on that industry as investors, employees, and consumers.

Go Back to Basic Principles

Let us return now to the immediate problem of the private electric companies concerning rights-of-way across government-owned lands. The companies may contend, of course, that the government ought to be a kind and benevolent landlord, willing to grant rights-of-way with no strings or conditions attached.

But suppose an electric company were seeking a right-of-way for a power line across the lands of one of its competitors in the electric business – as the builders of coal pipelines are now seeking rights-of-way across properties owned by the railroads, which also want to transport coal. Under such conditions, is the property owner expected to grant right-of-way to a competitor strictly on the latter's own terms? This, of course, is not a reasonable expectation.

As electric power companies well know, property owners along a proposed right-of-way can be most demanding in their terms and conditions. And occasionally, such opposition may be confronted with governmental power of eminent domain to force acceptance of "fair and reasonable" terms. However, the government's power of eminent domain is of no avail when that self-same government is the demanding owner of the property at issue. So it is that

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the electric companies, licensed, chartered, regulated, and controlled by the government, are strictly at the mercy of the government when seeking right-of-way across government-owned land.

To argue their case logically before the court of public opinion the electric companies and other businessmen similiarly threatened by governmental encroachment will be obliged to hark back to the fundamentals and basic principles of personal freedom of choice and full responsibility for the consequences; private ownership and control of property; voluntary exchange of all goods and services in open competition; and government limited in scope and power to the defense and protection of the life and property of every citizen equally against unprovoked acts of violence, fraud, predation, with a system of courts to decide matters in dispute and armed forces powerful enough to enforce all such decisions and to collect taxes sufficient to maintain the government in its proper functions.

By these basic principles, it is possible to explain logically why neither power companies nor any other creative activities should be chartered or licensed by the government in the first place, but left instead to competitive private enterprise; why the government has no business whatever in the generation or transmission of electricity or as producer or provider of any other goods or services that have a market price, leaving all this to competitive private enterprise; why the government should neither own nor control any parcel of land or any other scarce goods and resources beyond the necessary tools and instruments of war, leaving such ownership instead to the highest bidder and thus to the most capable management that can be found by the true and tested methods of open competition; why the government should grant neither favor nor exemption to any individual or group.[1] Then and only then can life and property be reasonably secure in the possession of those who have earned and paid for their rights-of-way. ◈

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[1] For further explanation of these limitations, see *Government: An Ideal Concept* by Leonard E. Read, Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York (1954). 149 pages. $1.50 paper, $2.00 cloth.

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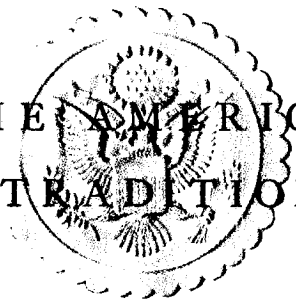

6. *Of Equality*

CLARENCE B. CARSON

IT WOULD be difficult today to discover a conception about which there is greater confusion than there is about the meaning of equality. Writers speak of legal equality, spiritual equality, social equality, political equality, and economic equality. The concern with the equality of individuals is complicated by talk of racial equality. For some, equality is virtually a dirty word; for others, it is the *summum bonum*, a highest good which has been "thingified" into an ideal. American opinions differ (and have differed) widely as to how much and what kind of equality is desirable. At anytime in American history there has been considerable leveling sentiment, countered, on the other hand, by a thrust to superior status and position by individuals and groups. With all of these differences in mind, one might well despair of discerning a tradition from among them.

It is not my intention, however, to try to discover the tradition of equality from among the various expression of ideas about it. Nor would I hope to discover it by looking for a "true" definition by way of semantic exercises. Consensus there may well have been from time to time, but it is to be found mainly by analysis of institutions, constitutions, customs, and practices, not by the review of debates – however useful these may be for discovering justifications that may have been given for a practice. Indeed, traditions are

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Illustration: National Archives

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more often to be found in matters that do not come up for debate than in controversial matters. It is unlikely that contemporary pollsters would discover any tradition by their methods; they would only discover opinions about one. A tradition is something that has become embedded in the texture of the lives of a people, and it is there that it must be uncovered.

Let us look for the American tradition of equality first in the most familiar statement of it, the one found in the Declaration of Independence. The familiar phrase begins, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . ." But we are in trouble already. What do these words mean? They are little illuminated by the text from which they are drawn. Does this mean that all men have equal capacities at birth? Does it mean that there are no essential differences among those who are born? Does it mean that all our differences are a product of environment and nurture? Does it mean that heredity counts for naught? Is it a surreptitious promise of a redistribution of wealth, the militant rhetoric of revolutionaries trying to rally the have-nots to their cause? It is none of these things. Yet I do not draw my conclusion from semantic analysis nor from a poll of the men who affixed their signatures to the Declaration – though both methods are helpful in support of such a conclusion.

The meaning of the controversial phrase – "that all men are created equal" – is made clear in the first place by its historical context. The Declaration of Independence was addressed to the "Powers of the earth," which at that time meant the European powers. It was directed to people who were accustomed to hierarchical social arrangements, to hereditary classes and fixed orders. This pronouncement was set against a historical background of similar practices with which Americans had been familiar.

Medieval Inequalities

The American tradition of equality emerged, then, from the Medieval and authoritarian background of inequality. In the Middle Ages, there was not even a bent toward equality. On the contrary, the tendency was for each man to have a station within a hierarchy, and for this position to be passed on from father to son. This tendency was buttressed by the belief that such a social order reflected a divine order in the universe. As one historian describes it, "The world was a great allegory, whose essential secret was its meaning, not its operation or its causes; it was a hierarchical

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order, extending from lowest to highest, from stones and trees through man to the choirs upon choirs of angels. . . ."[1] Within this greater order, men had their orders and ranks. Thus, John of Salisbury, a twelfth century philosopher, describes a commonwealth and likens it to the body of a man. He says:

> The place of the head in the body of the commonwealth is filled by the prince, who is subject only to God and to those who exercise His office and represent Him on earth, even as in the human body the head is quickened and governed by the soul. . . . Officials and soldiers correspond to the hands. . . . The husbandmen correspond to the feet, which always cleave to the soil. . . .[2]

According to feudal theory, there were three orders of men: clergy, nobility, and peasants and burghers. Each of these orders had rights, privileges, and responsibilities. Within any given order, men were ranked in hierarchies. Thus, within the clergy there were ranks ranging from archbishop and bishop at the top to deacons and sub-deacons at the bottom. The nobility ranged from archdukes to lowly knights. Within the guilds the range was from master craftsman to apprentice. Even crafts were apt to be ranked in hierarchies; there were lesser guilds and greater guilds. Each order tended to have courts of its own to enforce its rights. Hence, benefit of clergy once meant the privilege of a clergyman to be tried in a clerical court. The right to a trial by a jury of his peers meant the right of a man to be tried by others of his rank. Even ranks were apt to have special privileges, spelled out in great detail. Note the following provisions in the Magna Charta:

> Earls and Barons shall not be amerced but by their Peers, and that only according to the degree of their delinquency.
>
> No Clerk shall be amerced for his lay holding, but according to the manner of the others as aforesaid, and not according to the quantity of his ecclesiastical benefice.
>
> All Barons who have founded Abbeys, which they hold by Charters from the Kings of England, or by ancient tenure, shall have the custody of them when they become vacant, as they ought to have.[3]

It is doubtful that this system was ever absolutely rigidly established anywhere. Certain it is, too,

[1] John H. Randall, Jr., *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940, rev. ed.), p. 36.

[2] James B. Ross and Mary M. McLaughlin, eds., *The Portable Medieval Reader* (New York: Viking, 1949), pp. 47-48.

[3] Eugen Weber, ed., *The Western Tradition* (Boston: Heath, 1959), pp. 196-97.

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that in many places feudalism was breaking down in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Yet as late as the seventeenth century in England, at the time of the beginning of American colonization, rank and order were still very important. One historian says:

> When Lord Berkeley returning from London came down over the terraces of the Cotswolds to the hundred of Berkeley in the Severn valley, he was met by troops of tenants and retainers. His progress toward his castle was indicated by the peals of bells from the church tower of each village as he reached it. . . .
>
> The prestige of peers of whatever rank was still great. The general public looked upon them as men whose duty it was to stand round the King and be his advisors.[4]

They were still likely to be first in line for lands which the Crown had at its disposal, for patents to be awarded, and they still possessed numerous prerogatives denied to other men.

Class Traditions in Colonial America

The early settlers who came to America were usually conscious of rank and its prerogatives. As Notestein observes, "Few of those English who came to the New World were of gentle stock, but they brought traditions of class with them. When a lawyer grew rich and important in a New England Village, he was often dubbed 'the squire,' as many gentlemen in England were called. In Virginia ...they set up plantations modeled on the manors they had known in England, and tried to live, as best they could, like country gentlemen."[5] One may still read such nice distinctions as "mister" and "goodman" attached to the signatures of those who signed the Mayflower Compact. But hereditary position was never firmly fixed on American soil. There was no monarch residing in America to build a following by appointing nobles. Nonetheless, class distinctions were perpetuated, or, more accurately, efforts were made to perpetuate them. Massachusetts passed an act in 1650 which said in part: "We declare our utter detestation and dislike that men and women of mean condition should take upon themselves the garb of gentlemen, by wearing gold or silver lace or buttons, or points at their knees, or to walk in boots, or women of the same rank to wear silk or tiffany. . . ."[6]

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[4] Wallace Notestein, *The English People on the Eve of Colonization* (New York: Harper, 1954), pp. 36-37.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[6] Quoted in Curtis P. Nettels, *The Roots of American Civilization* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963, 2nd ed.), p. 327.

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Indentured servants occupied an inferior legal position. Landed estates were transmitted whole from father to eldest son by the rule of primogeniture. Even so, younger sons could advance by their own efforts, and "it was relatively easy for a servant to become a small landowner or independent artisan. . . . Excepting the fixed status of slaves, the flexibility of colonial society was its distinguishing feature."[7]

The above, then, is the historical background for understanding the meaning of Jefferson's phrase — "that all men are created equal." He was disavowing hereditary rank and privilege. Within the context of the Declaration, he was saying that the Creator has *not* established a position for any person at the creation. That is not to say that all men are equal in capacity or that they will remain equal in ability or effort. Nor does it imply that there are to be no distinctions among men during the course of their lives. On the contrary, it implies that such distinctions as a man shall acquire shall be his without benefit of legal prescription based on heredity.

Two Kinds of Equality

Two kinds of equality, so far as individuals are concerned, are treated in the Declaration of Independence. First, there is *equality before the law.* This means that every man's case is tried by the same law governing any particular case. Practically, it means that there are no different laws for different classes and orders of men. The definition of premeditated murder is the same for the millionaire as for the tramp.[8] A corollary of this is that no classes are created or recognized by law. Second, the Declaration refers to an *equality of rights.* The second part of the sentence already alluded to read, "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these, are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Each man is equally entitled to his life with every other man; each man has an equal title to God-given liberties along with every other. The probable meaning of "pursuit of Happiness" is that each man is entitled to the use of his faculties for his own well being (pleasure).

It is not my intention, however,

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] It does not follow that the members of a jury will hold the same opinion of a millionaire as of a tramp. Nor does it mean that each of these men will have an equally good defense. Perhaps they should have (though that is a questionable proposition), but it was no part of the American tradition that they would have.

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to found this interpretation of the tradition upon semantic renderings. The Constitution offers considerable institutional support for the above interpretation. For example, Article I, Section 9 contains this provision: "No title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State." This was designed to prevent the creation of an hereditary aristocracy. The same section prohibits Congress to pass bills of attainder by which some class of disabled persons might be created. It also contains this interesting provision:[9] "No capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken." In view of later developments, this provision deserves comment. It was an attempt to provide for an equality of taxation, if any direct taxes were levied. It must have meant that no more tax could be levied upon any one man than upon any other.

There are other indirect attempts to acknowledge an equality of rights within the Constitution. Powers denied to the Congress and to the states are an implicit protection of rights. The Bill of Rights, by prohibiting action of the Congress, tend toward the establishment of an equality of rights. If government cannot intervene, it cannot confer rights on some and deny them to others. States also established certain rights beyond the reach of their governments.

A Major Exception

A major exception to equality before the law and equality of rights, however, existed and was recognized at the time of the founding of the Republic. It was Negro slavery. Slavery was an inferior status, and it was inherited in America. The Constitution tacitly recognized slavery by referring to free persons and *others*. State laws, where slavery was practiced, distinguished between slave and free in numerous ways.

This large scale departure from the principle of equality troubled many people at the time of the setting up of the government. Northern leaders argued that slavery must not be disturbed, else the Constitution would not be accepted. Many Virginians, at least, inclined to blame England with fastening slavery upon America,

[9] Since abridged by the 16th Amendment.

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which strikes us as somewhat disingenuous. The point is that they saw the inconsistency, but saw no practical way of coping with it. At that time, it was hoped by those who were troubled that slavery would disappear and that perhaps the Negroes would assume a position of equality of rights. There must have been a great variety of opinions on this, however, and it was not generally much debated.

Reconstruction Amendments

Later constitutional amendments removed both slavery and the disabilities attached to it. The 13th Amendment, adopted in 1865, abolished slavery. The 14th Amendment, proclaimed as ratified in 1868, provided, among many other things, that no state should "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." As regards equality, these amendments may be considered as an extension and establishment of the tradition of equality before the law and equality of rights.

It should be noted, however, that in so far as the 14th Amendment provided for the extension of federal authority it interfered with an equally important tradition of federalism. The 15th and 19th Amendments may also be regarded as extensions of equality in that they prohibit the denial of the elective franchise on the basis of race or sex. Again, however, they extended the central government into matters theretofore reserved to the states. Moreover, they refer to the "right . . . to vote," which introduced a confusion into constitutional language from which we have not begun to recover.

Voting Is a Secondary Right

The rights of which the Founders spoke were natural rights. Voting could not be a natural right, for these were conceived as something existing prior to society or governments. Voting obviously is something which can only be exercised in a society with an organized government. Hence, voting could be described properly as a privilege, a privilege granted by government. But if it is called a right, and there is to be an equality of rights, then everyone should be entitled to it, including children, presumably. This is only one example of the confusion in which we are caught that has been occasioned by the loose use of language.

The above, with exceptions noted, does indicate the main lines of the development and delineation of an American tradition of

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equality. Further evidence that it is the tradition may be found in expressions of contemporary documents and statesmen. For example, the Virginia Bill of Rights, adopted in 1776, has this to say on equality:

> That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.[10]

The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 stated that "all men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights."[11] It further declared that governments were organized "for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people, and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man."[12] More, "each individual of the society has a right to be protected by it in the enjoyment of his life, liberty, and property according to standing laws."[13] The Virginia constitution proclaimed that no one is entitled to "exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of public services."[14]

Other References to Rights

There are other important expressions of the meaning of equality that can be gleaned from the debates over the adoption of the Constitution of 1787. Edmund Pendleton delivered himself of this opinion regarding classes and equality, speaking to the Virginia Convention:

> I am unfortunate enough to differ from the worthy member in another circumstance. He professes himself an advocate for the middling and lower classes of men. I profess to be a friend to the equal liberty of all men, from the palace to the cottage without any other distinction than that between good and bad men....
>
> Why bring into the debate the whims of writers – introducing the distinction of *well-born* from others? I consider every man *well-born* who comes into the world with an intelligent mind, and with all his parts perfect. I am an advocate for fixing our government on true republican principles, giving to the poor man free liberty in his person and property.[15]

[10] Quoted in Rousas J. Rushdoony, *This Independent Republic* (1963), no page numbers.

[11] Quoted in Robert J. Harris, *The Quest for Equality* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), p. 19.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[15] *Elliot's* Debates, Bk. I, vol. 3, pp. 294-95.

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There was much talk of aristocracies and of the fear that they would come to dominate the new government. R. R. Livingston answered this charge in the New York debates. "The truth is, in these republican governments, we know no such ideal distinctions. We are all equally aristocrats. Offices, emoluments, honors, are open to all."[16]

Presidents over the years added their descriptions to the tradition of equality. Jefferson, in his First Inaugural Address, declared that an essential principle of our government was "equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political. . . ." He said "that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression." The content of equality he spelled out in this phrase: "entertaining a due sense of our equal right to the use of our own faculties, to the acquisitions of our own industry, to honor and confidence from our fellow-citizens, resulting not from birth, but from our actions and their sense of them. . . ." Andrew Jackson provided this memorable definition of equality:

> Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer, and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society . . . who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing.[17]

Andrew Johnson expressed this thought: "Here there is no room for favored classes or monopolies; the principle of our Government is that of equal laws and freedom of industry."[18]

A Limited, Negative Role

Certain salient features of the American tradition of equality emerge from the above discussion. First, it is a very *limited* kind of equality that is avowed. *Equality*

[16] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 278.

[17] Quoted in Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[18] Rushdoony, *op. cit.*

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before the law and an *equality of rights* subsume the various expressions of it. Second, it assumes a *negative* role for government. This theme occurs repeatedly: Congress shall make *no* law . . .; *No* bill of attainder . . . shall be passed; *No* title of nobility . . . shall be granted; *No* room for favored classes . . .; *No* capitation or other direct tax shall be laid. . . . The impact of this is positive, though the statements are negative. It means that men are freed from the restraints of fixed classes and orders, that they can use their energies to achieve their ends, so long as they do not violate the equal rights of others in doing so. Third, it in no way prescribes that men shall cease to make distinctions nor that differences will cease to exist. On the contrary, in the absence of legally prescribed positions, *there may be as many differences of degree as there are individuals,* to the despair of sociologists no doubt. Each man has the opportunity – so far as law is concerned – to rise as high as he can, to acquire as much as he can, to achieve whatever deference his neighbors will pay to him. Fourth, such a conception of *equality is consonant with liberty;* indeed, it is a concomitant of the greatest liberty. I make this point because many thinkers have thought they perceived an inevitable tension between liberty and equality. But so long as equality is limited to the narrow sphere defined above, so long as the role of the government is negative, so long as men are free to move within informal social arrangements, there is no necessary antipathy between liberty and equality.

But equality can, and often has, become the basis for revolutionary action. It can be transformed easily into a social goal which when men adopt it can be the proclaimed end for laying waste to the social order and erecting tyrannies. This is why I have felt it necessary to treat it very gingerly thus far. I believe that equality was a viable part of the American tradition. I also believe, however, that it has been subtly transformed in the course of our history until today it is being used as a basis for oppression. This situation came about by subtle changes in the content of the word equality wrought by shifting the meaning of ideas which informed it.

Government Redistribution

Let us take an example to demonstrate how the shift occurred. Many would assent to the proposition that the American tradition of equality is one of equality of opportunity. This is true of the

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older tradition only in a very limited sense. If by equality of opportunity is meant that legally all men may undertake whatever pursuit they choose with no legal distinctions among them, this was at the heart of the tradition. But suppose we begin to think about it in another way. Suppose we notice that in fact men are not on an equal footing when government remains neutral. Some men have the advantage of having had wealthy parents, of a better cultural environment, of more formal education, of better manners taught in the home, of greater native intellectual ability, and so on. We might conclude, as many Americans did, that without some positive governmental action men do not have an equality of opportunity. One of the first widespread efforts to close this gap was by providing education for all at the expense of the taxpayers. Beyond this, the progressive educationists, following John Dewey's ideas, have attempted to equalize opportunities by lavishing attention upon the slower students and relatively neglecting the brighter ones, if not holding these latter up to scorn. This was but a beginning, of course. Some children do not get a good diet at home, and their lunches are inadequate. The situation might be further equalized by providing inexpensive lunches for the children. Some children do not get the maximum benefit from their meals because of dental defects. Free dental examinations, at the least, are then provided. I could go on, but surely everyone knows of the proliferating programs of the schools for providing an "equality of opportunity."

But these programs have only scratched the surface of the inequalities among children. Some children still come from homes on the "wrong" side of the tracks. Some still have minority religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds which may call forth different treatment from their "peers." A start might be made on "equalizing" these things by removing all references to religion from the school and by mixing racial and ethnic groups with the general population. Logically, however, much more must be done to provide "real" equality of opportunity. All environmental and cultural differences will have to be obliterated. This would probably mean that children would have to be taken from their parents shortly after birth and brought up in a uniform environment provided by the state. Even the lustiest of American reformers have usually shrunk from such a thorough program, though Jean Jacques Rousseau – their spiritual

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godfather – recommended it two hundred years ago. The most we can say at the moment is that the American "pragmatic" experiment in equality has not yet reached the stage where this final step appears "necessary." It is, however, a logical extension of steps currently being taken.

Forced Equalization

The major changes in ideas which altered so drastically the content of equality can be stated briefly. Equality came to be interpreted positively, materialistically, and realistically. This followed a general shift in thought in America that began to be felt in the later part of the nineteenth century. This was accompanied by the spread of the idea that the government should act positively to effect an equality of condition. In short, equality was to be advanced collectively by the use of the power of the state which was now conceived by some as the arm of the people considered collectively. Equality became an unlimited concept – an ideal (or goal) for the society – something to be sought and accomplished by the society. Democracy, conceived as political participation by the "people," was to be the means to this end; but democracy, conceived as an equality of condition, became an end of itself.

The New Deal

There is not space here to demonstrate all of these changes. The following example, quoted from Franklin D. Roosevelt's Second Inaugural Address, demonstrates a political expression which followed upon this transformation:

> I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. . . . I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under *democratic* methods of government, national wealth can be *translated* into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown, and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.
>
> But here is the challenge to our *democracy*: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens – a substantial part of its whole population – who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life. . . .
>
> It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope – because the *Nation*, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the *subject* of *his country's interest and concern*. . . . The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether *we provide* enough *for those who have too little*.[19]

[19] Italics mine.

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We are all familiar with many of the programs by which the efforts to effect equality have been made, with Social Security, with the Federal Housing Administration, with the various direct relief programs, with minimum wages and hours legislation, with special concessions made to unions to "equalize" their bargaining power, with the graduated income tax, with excess profits taxes, with the Tennessee Valley Authority to "equalize" the price of electricity, with regulated freight rates, with the efforts of the Supreme Court to integrate the schools, and with numerous other programs, some less dramatic than those mentioned.

We are familiar, too, with complaints of conformity among the young, of the uniformity of housing financed with F. H. A. loans, of the unimaginative content of the school programs, of spreading crime and delinquency, of the tenacious blot of unemployment, of union violence and race riots. We have been troubled by inflation, by proliferating government regulations, by the ubiquitous tax collector, by the disintegration of the family.

"Equality" by Discrimination

Are there connections among these developments? I believe so. Once government acts positively to equalize the conditions of the citizenry, it must act *unequally* upon the individual members of the populace. The *government* must make distinctions among people. If it is to redistribute the wealth, it must take from those who produce and give to those who do not, thus making an invidious distinction between producers and nonproducers. If it is to prevent racial discrimination, it must acknowledge the race of litigants. If it is to balance the "power" between employers and employees, it must make a distinction between the two, granting to one and withholding from the other. In effect, our government has taken long strides toward creating special classes of people: i. e., union members, racial and ethnic minorities, farmers, government workers by way of civil service, and so on. In order to make men equal – or with that proclaimed objective – the government must perpetuate inequities, at least in the traditional sense. It should not surprise us if all sorts of unwanted social consequences follow upon such action.

If my analysis is correct, we have broken drastically with the American tradition of equality. Many practices have now been institutionalized which run almost directly counter to it. This idealized conception of equality threat-

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ens revolution in contemporary society, and could only be realized, if at all, by rooting out the last vestiges of liberty, removing choice, and obliterating differences from one man to another. Even then, I think it will fail of its objective. Those who work by government to effect these ends will erect new distinctions and classes more in keeping with their desires. It has already happened in other countries animated by the goal of equality. ◈

• *The next article in this series will treat "Of Voluntarism."*

GORDON CONKLIN

EVER HEAR of a man named Saint Augustine? He was the fellow who lived many centuries ago and who, after he became a Christian and saw living in a new light, wrote a book about the transformation that had taken place in his thinking. In it he revealed a great deal about human nature.

Augustine had a lot of wild oats to sow in his younger days and he pursued this task with great diligence. After all, "everyone was doing it" in his society and he couldn't see bucking the trend and missing all the fun. Once in a while, though, an uneasiness gnawed at his mind, so he would attempt to pray, *"O Lord, make me pure."*

But then a vision of his latest heart throb (clad in a Roman bikini) would flash before his eyes and he'd hastily *add the words . . . "but not yet."*

I have heard several speakers lately whose words remind me just a bit of Saint Augustine. In essence, here's what they said, "Sure we may disagree with the direction our society is going, particularly with the fact that more and more people are turning over their responsibilities to govern-

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ment. Whether it's tagged socialism, the welfare state, or any other label, is beside the point. If that's the direction the majority wants to go, why should we butt our heads against a stone wall? Shouldn't we get aboard the bandwagon and take advantage of the situation instead of slipping behind the parade?

Make me pure and stalwart, O Lord, . . . but not yet. Not until I have gotten mine and am too old to give a damn any more. Help me preserve the freedom for which my ancestors shed their blood . . . . but not if it means accepting a weekly wage below that of the electrical workers' union!

Help me see the values of the incentives of a competitive society where each person's income is determined by ability and willingness to work . . . . but for goodness sake not until I have achieved parity, and legislation has been passed that guarantees equal incomes for all!

Thou knowest, O Lord, that I long to bequeath my children a land of opportunity without the necessity to purchase the right to produce, or obtain permission to enter an occupation . . . . but these things are certainly essential for the present emergency if my own cup is to overflow.

Guard me from the temptation in the future to cut open the golden goose of our free enterprise system for a few golden eggs. . . . but trouble me not about my present carving activities. I pray for the inner stamina whereby I may stand firm for what is right, regardless of its popularity at the moment . . . . but not until my net worth is adequate for financial independence, and especially not until I have qualified for benefits from programs financed at public expense. Thou art so remote, and sometimes heedless to my pleas, but my Great White Uncle in Washington is ever eager to return, to all those who cooperate, a portion of that which he has taxed from them.

The record of humanity, including the Book especially inspired by Thee, tells us that the upward thrust of mankind has been led by men often unpopular with the crowd. Thy prophets and Thy Son called upon us to seek truth rather than what is merely expedient – called us to dig deep beneath the surface of living, seeking to understand and to make a part of ourselves those things of lasting value. Grant me the courage to risk the derision of my neighbors in the fight for what is of lasting value, even if it costs me to do so . . . . but not yet. ◈

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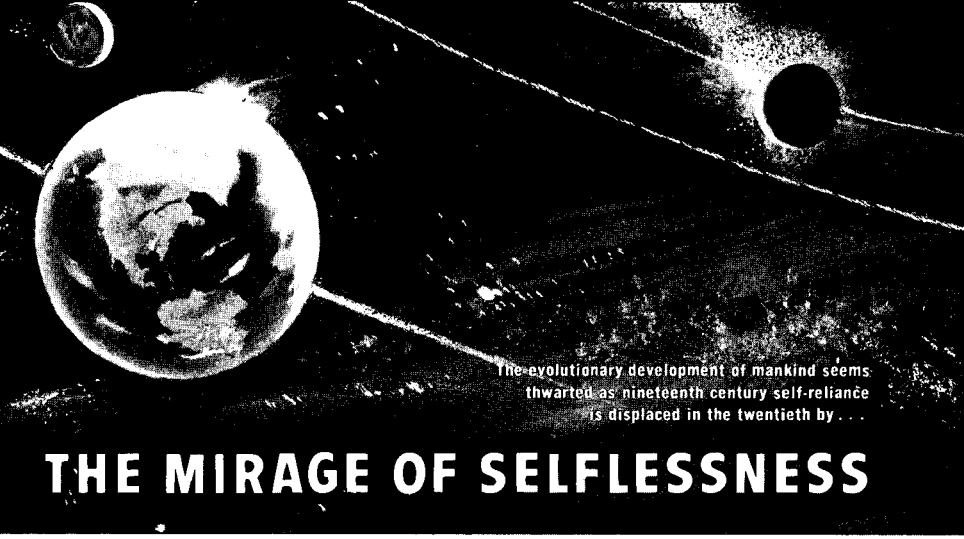

The evolutionary development of mankind seems thwarted as nineteenth century self-reliance is displaced in the twentieth by . . .

THE MIRAGE OF SELFLESSNESS

JOHN C. SPARKS

OCCASIONAL FLASHES during man's time on this sphere have illuminated the otherwise dark path toward his ethereal ultimate goal.

These illuminations have shown through and have been identified with the lives of individuals, thus contributing knowledge of God's truths to all who would listen, perceive, and know.

No one ever has been able to predict which particular man would receive and employ the blessing of deep discernment. I suspect the blessing itself is common enough, probably being available to most men, but put into practice only slightly by a few, and used intensively by even fewer. Whenever it is used fully, however, the human race has a Socrates, a Newton, or a Galileo to lead it another step upward. Yet no one could pick out these rare men in advance of their great achievements. In fact, too few people recognize the qualities of greatness until long after the demise of the great.

The significant point is this: no man should be prevented from developing himself as he can and will, for in him may be the next impulse that pushes mankind ahead.

The miracle of the Man of Galilee is considered by many to be the brightest illumination of all that has come to bless man. He taught individual responsibility, and his parables concerned each person fulfilling his own capacity. Yet, man-made religious dogma, coupled with total politi-

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cal power, effectively prevented this magnificent idea from bearing fruit for many centuries until the shackles imprisoning the mind were broken by the renaissance of independent thought. Examples are known of men who feared to reveal their newly-acquired knowledge, and doubtless there were many who died without ever revealing to their contemporaries their unusual insight into truths that could have modified or changed completely the unenlightened political custom and religious dogma in their times.

Copernicus, canon of the cathedral of Frauenberg in East Prussia, became convinced that the earth was not the fixed center of the universe but revolved around the sun. He hid his findings for ten years and had his calculations published only when he was on his deathbed in 1543. Later, in the same century, Galileo was imprisoned and tortured for expounding the theories of Copernicus.

Today, from a vantage point of partially-opened eyes, we can hardly imagine circumstances wherein punishment such as this was the "reward" of great illumination. But, nevertheless, from such dire conditions came a new freedom, a freeing of the minds of men from man-made ecclesiastical slavery. In America, an attempt was made to create a new political system that declared each man was endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights. Men like Franklin, the Adamses, Jefferson, Henry, and many others designed a new societal arrangement wherein they attempted to set up a limited government of very little power that would interfere in the separate lives and decisions of its citizens only in specified situations where those God-given liberties were transgressed. While imperfect in part, the concept of severely-limited government permitted more individual freedom than ever known before. Recognition of a deeper meaning of ownership rights and the improved concept of limited government soon brought forth previously undreamed of advances in material goods, medical research, and scientific discoveries in which the prominent illuminations came from such men as Whitney, Edison, Ford, Kettering, the Curies, Pasteur, the Wright brothers – it is impossible to name everyone responsible for the exciting moves forward of the past two centuries.

The Fruits of Freedom

It is not impossible, however, to know what atmosphere spawned so many illuminations. Each man had come into possession of a

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larger amount of freedom enabling him to delve into his own area of interest as he and he alone wished – to explore the business world and produce things or services for his fellow men; to seek his destiny in the professions; to write; to compose; or to pursue philosophical and spiritual meanings.

Especially during the nineteenth century, man experienced this awakening to the philosophy and the fruits of freedom in unprecedented measure. Self-reliance and independence were then laudable traits, not only in the world of commerce but also in the nonmaterial areas of reflective thought. It was considered good to develop the values and characteristics of self-confidence, self-responsibility, and self-respect. There was no reason to be ashamed of sincerely striving to succeed, to concentrate upon training oneself with special skill or special knowledge in order to reach a worth-while goal. The principles of honesty, truth, and individual responsibility were the straightforward, uncomplicated rules of the game. And almost everyone was "winning" the game from a human-comfort viewpoint, since there are few losers when a sizable proportion of the people follow these sound principles of self-responsibility.

A Changing Attitude

We are now past the middle of the twentieth century. Somewhere, somehow, during the intervening years, interest in oneself, or self-concern, has been deprived of its former admirable meaning. Instead, it appears to have acquired a cloak of greediness that precludes voluntary charitable acts, human kindness, and justice. The rightful reputation of self-interest as the means of attaining virtues has been tarnished almost beyond recognition as inhuman and sinful.

Examples abound to illustrate this change in public attitude. Businessmen half apologize for making a profit and, indeed, sometimes assert they are in business for some altruistic purpose – profits being only incidental. Some industrialists seek ways to reduce the high progressive income tax by proposing partial rate manipulations and minor rule modifications, instead of arguing the basic principle involved. The tone is conciliatory, rather than a stanch demand for complete recognition of the right of each person to the value produced by his own effort.

In a neighboring city, a well-known doctor won an award of appreciation from a citizens' group for his excellent medical and extracurricular civic work for many years in his community. He

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was a man of numerous exciting interests, well-read, striking and handsome in appearance, athletic and capable in sports, an entertaining and thoughtful speaker – yet he was described as a selfless man! Humble, yes; selfless, not a chance, as later discussion will prove.

Good, healthy self-interest, as a praiseworthy objective, has given way to something called "selflessness." A young college student told me he was troubled in his thoughts about Christianity and the competitive free-market system. He could not reconcile the self-interest of competition with Christian principles, he said. And his error is all too common.

In the wish to open oneself to the will of God, perhaps we assume that it is not possible to mold one's self-will into something unique and yet be consistent with the will of God. In the mid-twentieth century, the style is to unite men in groups under the banners of all kinds of "worthy" programs, while abandoning our individual wills. Countless organizations have meddled viciously into the affairs of self-reliant individuals until these individuals have either destroyed themselves in their desperate attempts to remain independent, or have in resignation joined the collectivized mode of living. It is one thing to open one's life and goals to God's purpose; it is quite another thing to surrender one's will to collectivized men.

Whatever the reason for the decline of respect for wholesome self-interest, it has occurred along with the decline in degree and scope of individual freedom. This appears to be more than coincidence!

Self-Interest Pervades Every Human Action

It is my intent to defend self-interest as a respectable and cherished actuality of individual man in society. Technically, there is no debate because self-interest (or self-concern, or self-satisfaction, or self-gratification) pervades every human action.[1] Consequently, it is present in every association or system made up of human beings, and as character-

[1] Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy and State*, Vol. I, (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1963):
P. 1—"All human beings *act* by virtue of their existence and their nature as human beings. We could not conceive of human beings who do not act purposefully, who have no ends in view that they desire and attempt to attain. Things that did not *act*, that did not behave purposefully, would no longer be classified as human."
P. 183—". . . in every action, men try to obtain the greatest advantage, i.e., to attain the end located on the highest possible point on their value scale . . . This is a praxeological truth, a general law holding for all human action, with no qualification whatsoever."

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istic of socialism, communism, Christianity, agnosticism, or any other grouping of people, as of the market place. Each person selects that action available to him which provides the most satisfaction to himself. There are no exceptions to this natural law of human action unless a person is mentally impaired and without control of the normal capacity to think. Only this latter exception, I contend, tallies accurately with the definition of a *selfless* person, "without regard for oneself or one's own interest." In analysis, no person can truly act in utter disregard for his own interest unless temporarily or permanently devoid of his thought processes.

Selflessness refers to C's conclusion that A has acted so as to give B satisfaction *at A's expense.* But this only means that C fails to appreciate or comprehend the quality of action that brings satisfaction to A.

There is no issue to be argued concerning motivation of human action by self-interest. It is a happy fact of human life; therefore, the accusation that free market competition has more self-interest than does Christianity is without logical foundation – as if to argue that horse-racing is worse than dog-racing because horses are animals. Self-interest is present in every human act.

Quality of Interest

Obviously, however, there are varying degrees of *quality* of self-interest. The barroom bum, except when completely inebriated, displays as much self-interest as a medical researcher. Probably there is no difference in their quantities of self-interest – but the qualities are miles apart. A criminal's self-interest may be satisfied by escaping capture regardless of the means used. It is not uncommon to read of a criminal threatening a hostage's life with a declaration that he has already killed one person, and one more would make little difference. The satisfaction choices or alternatives available to this criminal not only have fallen to a low level of quality, but also the range of choice has narrowed. To escape punishment for crimes committed, he must commit more crimes.

On the other hand, a well-trained surgeon may face available choices to practice in a medical center and perform highly specialized surgery, or to take his skill to a smaller community, or to work in a foreign mission hospital. One of the alternatives will provide him with the most self-gratification – and that one he will choose. I cannot know which it will be. But according to my observation, any one of the three alternatives of expressing his self-

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interest is infinitely better than any of the expressions of self-interest available to the criminal above.

A Free Society

Rather than judge an economic system, a political form of society, a religious belief, or any human grouping on the presumed presence or absence of self-interest, one should instead evaluate on the basis of the quality of self-interest that the group, system, or belief fosters.

How does a free society (in which competition is the natural result) measure up in this regard? How does it compare with an unfree society (without competition)? People strive to achieve the highest degree and quality of self-satisfaction regardless of the political system under which they live. They attempt to increase their material possessions. They want to win the favorable acceptance of their families, friends, and acquaintances through business, civic, or other accomplishments.

In a free society, each man is responsible for himself – therefore, must rely on himself to provide the level of living or whatever else gives him the most self-gratification. The amount and degree of *his* success depends solely upon *his* ability and will to choose the actions that will produce *for him* the highest quality of satisfaction. A higher quality of self-interest is thus encouraged in a free society, for with it comes better material and nonmaterial rewards *for him.*

But rewards alone are not the only incentives. There are also incentives of a negative nature, so that failure to exert effort and to make good decisions *will bring him* such penalties as hunger, cold, inconvenience, discomfort, and material loss. Since it is comfortable to have enough food and uncomfortable to be hungry, and since each person is responsible for feeding himself in a free society, there is no doubt as to the presence of this motivation via self-interest. As wants beyond food and the basic necessities are attainable to individual persons (that is, if they are free to try to attain them), the quality of self-interest undergoes a change. It points unmistakably upward toward a higher quality of satisfaction choices from which all society benefits. The good is amplified and the bad minimized when men are free.

Under Collectivism

The opposite results occur in an *un*free society of no competition. An authoritarian political system primarily is concerned with re-

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taining its political power. Since man acts in a manner to obtain his necessities with the least effort, the clever politician develops governmental policies that "play" on this human trait – a weakness in this instance – resulting in surrender to the "something for nothing" sickness. Thus, voting support is won by men in power interjecting government interference in the market place, so that exchange is on some basis other than mutual satisfaction.

If such exchange is other than mutually satisfactory, it follows that at least one party to the exchange – if not both – is less pleased than he would have been if the exchange had taken place under terms prevailing in a free market. This generates no incentive to try harder. One, however, always receives a politically-calculated advantage over the other. And if the one is symbolical of *many voters*, while the other is symbolical of *fewer voters* (such as in progressive taxation), then numerically larger voting support has been bought by the authoritarians in power. Accomplished is their prime objective to remain in power, but at the expense of individual incentive.

Government Planning

When government planning enters into the economic decisions of its citizens, their freedom of choice is narrowed – at least proportionately; perhaps more. Not only are the choices narrowed in quantity, they are lowered in quality. Man's higher quality choices that would otherwise result from new ideas, inventions, and creations, if he were free, simply do not come into being, *à la* the times of Copernicus and Galileo. The area of human endeavor, out of which comes the wonderful illuminations that lift mankind onward and upward, cannot live in the planned society. The good, therefore, is blocked substantially from coming into existence when men are not free. Errors of human judgment, on the other hand, when multiplied by the full force of government, unduly affect even those who would not normally subscribe to these poor decisions if they were free to choose. Thus, the bad in an authoritarian society is amplified.

These are the comparable levels of quality found in the self-interest of man living in an atmosphere of freedom, and man living under the drawback of coercive government planning. The first leads on to evolutionary fulfillment; the second retraces man's steps toward the primitive.

Before concluding this study, we should take a quick look at the advocates of selflessness.

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When Other Interest Gains Ascendancy

Those who oppose human action based upon self-interest often ascribe to themselves, or to their objectives, the presumed quality of being selfless, and as being concerned with others. Part of the description is accurate; part is not.

Keep in mind that no conscious human being, with his mental faculties intact, can act except with the intention to satisfy his own best interest as he sees it. Therefore, the opponents of self-interest deceive themselves with the delusion that they act or seek to act selflessly. It is not possible. This is the inaccurate part of their self-analysis. The balance, however, is accurate; that is, *they are concerned with others*. Hold your cheers, however, until you find out in what way they are concerned.

Other-interest is not an uncommon characteristic among men and certainly not peculiar to the advocates of selflessness. It is probable that all persons utilize their *other-interest* to determine the degree of self-gratification in their own acts. Thus, the husband works to win the approval and the plaudits of his wife and family. The shoe manufacturer employs *other-interest* to help him keep his product "in style" – that is, he complies with a standard of market acceptance that ultimately leads to the self-satisfaction of profit. *Other-interest* is as common as self-interest, since it is so closely related as a means of measuring self-satisfaction. Therefore, it is not logical to label *other-interest* as the distinguishing characteristic of the advocates of selflessness.

The all-important difference is in the *kind of other-interest* they display. Do these advocates of selflessness try to persuade others on a voluntary basis? Do they recognize independent wills in other human beings? Are they willing to allow others the right to disagree and to retain a right to dissent completely?

Or is persuasion only the frosting to disguise the ugliness of compulsion? Do they push toward their objective even if it requires a law to be passed enforcing the outcome as they visualize it? Do they force the dissenter to comply? Does the dissenter's right to decline the proposition merely refer to his "right" to be out-voted?

Herein lies the telltale characteristic of the *other-interest* found in the advocates of selflessness. They are willing to promote their ideas involving the lives and actions of other persons – not by noncoercive persuasion that wins voluntary acceptance, but by force of law.

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Social Uplifting

Before jumping to the conclusion that those responsible for this erosion of self-concern are some diabolical rascals living in other places and other communities, and are knowingly plotting the downfall of individual liberty, take a good look in your community. Read your local newspaper. Who are the ones working to promote full employment in your area by asking federal assistance? To distribute charity more equitably through law? To build up the school system through local action to qualify for more state and federal help? To rejuvenate the downtown business district by condemning privately-owned properties of some for the benefit of others? To increase medical services for population segments by misnamed "security" laws? To stabilize the local economy by supporting federally-enforced marketing laws involving the legal exchange prices of wheat and milk, only two of many products thus controlled? The list goes on and on – illustrating the many evil results of this type of *other-interest* political action in your area.

Who commit these deeds? Are they professional communist schemers?

There is little chance that avowed communist plotters are making this assault on human freedom in our nation. The culprits more likely are to be found among the active members of such reputable institutions as local civic associations, community betterment planning organizations, PTA's, church social action groups, charitable societies, professional associations, and chambers of commerce. The list is incomplete, but illustrative. These groups seem to have a ravenous appetite to improve others. They advocate whatever means are available – and the easiest means in this twentieth century of declining regard for individual choice is to "get a law passed."

A Disease

If this desire to meddle in the affairs of others were called a disease (as it might well be), every community and remote corner of our country is being sickened with its terrible plague. We may be inclined to blame the lawmakers of our local, state, and national governments. But lawmakers do not get that meddlesome, planning-for-the-good-of-mankind feeling without considerable encouragement from their constituents.

Self-interest is a fact among men. It enables mankind to move forward in his evolution toward God's purpose. We must no longer

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deceive ourselves into believing that self-interest is inconsistent with God's destiny for mankind. We must recognize that *selflessness* is not only a paradoxical impossibility, but also its pursuit is exceedingly undesirable.

The national fad of the twentieth century is to pass a law and force acceptance of both the professional and the nonprofessional planners who thereby lawfully meddle into affairs that rightfully belong to individual persons. This must be reversed.

We must reopen the door to illuminations of truth that flow most rapidly within the minds of free men. Unless we return to an atmosphere of human freedom, our day on this fleeting stage of time will have no significance whatsoever toward the evolution of human destiny, except that we dragged our feet in a mirage of nothing, called "selflessness." ◈

THERE MUST BE A *Better Way*

JESS RALEY

WE ARE REMINDED every day, and often many times a day, that this nation must produce more educated people or be buried, both militarily and economically, by communism. As a matter of fact, the pressure for more education is growing so strong in America, one may easily be led to assume that ignorance is very closely related to treason, or at best a decided lack of patriotism.

I am certainly not anti-education but it seems to me that there must be a better way to inspire our youth to seek knowledge.

A young man whom I have known since he was twelve is a typical case. This boy had expressed the desire to become a

Mr. Raley is a free-lance author, speaker, philosopher from Gadsden, Alabama.

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doctor and his father had encouraged him. After one year of college, however, the boy quit school and accepted a job in the mills of a large industry. The boy's father was very disappointed and asked me to talk to his son about returning to school. I consented, since I felt that this lad could be an outstanding success in any field of endeavor.

After several preliminary thrusts, which the boy parried with admirable dexterity, I was forced to ask him outright why he had elected to become a mill worker.

"I have told Dad more than once, but I don't really mind going over it again," the boy said. "Of course, I could give you the old 'blessed are the horny hands of toil' and all that rot, but I won't. You see, I really would like to be a doctor, but I got to figuring: Take the years required to qualify, plus the chance that I would not be successful; add the extra taxes involved if I did reach the high-income-bracket level, mix well with the fact that doctors will most likely be working for the government in a few years, and you should arrive at the same conclusion I did."

The boy seemed to be beyond reach, but his father would not concede defeat.

"I tell you, Dad, I have the most security anyone can have, outside of jail, right where I am," the boy said at last. "In three years I will be earning about seventy-five hundred a year. If I am off for lack of work, we have the guaranteed annual wage. Should I get sick, we have insurance paid by the company. I cannot be forced to work any faster than I choose to work: the union won't allow it. You just can't beat a deal like that."

"Suppose the company goes out of business?" I asked, thinking I saw a weak place in the boy's defense.

"No problem," he shot back. "In a case like that, the government will declare this a disaster area and feed us, retrain us, or both." Then as an afterthought, he added, "Boy, old Uncle Sugar really is a cube. If he wants people to go to school so bad, why does he keep working so hard to make the educated and the uneducated equal?"

In the face of such logic, I can only add that the voice of this nation's plea for better education appears to be drowned by the greater sound of opposing action.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE

FRANCIS E. MAHAFFY

THE ADVOCATES of what is called social justice conceive of it as relating primarily to the economic status of the individual. It is unjust, in their view, for some to have great wealth while others have only the bare essentials. It is unjust for the price, rent, or interest rate to be "too high." Profits are often accepted as necessary though it is unjust for them to be "excessive." Private property is not usually condemned in toto by these writers, though many of them class it as a necessary evil.

An excessive amount of private property, however, is generally condemned as unjust and a warrant for the increasing interventions of the welfare state.

Many people advocate social justice from religious motives. Some religious people have made the illogical jump from the need to manifest a loving concern for those in physical need to the advocacy of political means to accomplish this end. Professor Brown writes:

> If any man is hungry, this is both a religious and a political concern, and out of a religious concern for one created in God's image, political means must be devised for ensuring that everyone gets enough bread – which is a suitable enough definition of the art of politics.[1]

Such thinking is on a level with alchemy. Bread – meaning all the economic production by which men's creaturely needs are supplied – can be legislated into scarcity. But legislation cannot produce bread, any more than incantations can produce gold.

When the matter is examined, it is obvious that this concept of social justice is destructive of real justice. By prefixing the adjective "social" to the concept of justice the result is a destruction of proper justice and a perversion of true social concern. Social concern or fraternity is the responsi-

The Reverend Mr. Mahaffy has served since 1945 as a missionary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Eritrea, East Africa.

[1] Robert McAfee Brown. *The Spirit of Protestantism* (Oxford, 1961), p. 202.

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bility of the individual and of voluntary associations of individuals. It often springs from religious or humanitarian motives. But it loses its religious significance and changes its nature the instant it becomes a political matter. It is a human and religious duty to care for one's parents, to support the sick, and to alleviate suffering and famine. This duty is always in the realm of private and personal relationships and can never be properly effected by impersonal political means. The state cannot love our parents; it cannot clothe the naked and visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction as commanded by Christ. All it is able to do is to use the arm of force to redistribute income.

This personal concern and sympathy that leads to material and spiritual help to the afflicted and needy is not a matter of justice; it is in the realm of the spirit, not of the law. The beggar on the streets of an Eastern city does not have a "just" claim upon our alms. The leper in an African hut does not have a "right" to the services of the medical missionary or to the medicines sent by charitable Christians. The help given lies in the realm of charity, and charity is no longer charity if it ceases to be voluntary. It is unfortunate that some Africans and Asians are unable to properly clothe and feed their children or to earn wages of more than five cents an hour, but it is not necessarily a matter of injustice.

Love and sympathy for those in need is an obligation laid upon the Christian, but to invoke coercive political action to accomplish this distorts Christianity. Political implementation of religious duty removes material assistance from the realm of love to that of force and makes a mockery of Christian charity. The term "social" as it is used by some people to describe the fraternity that should exist among men is a term that loses its meaning when it is conceived of as the demand of justice rather than as the fruit of love.

Justice vs. Charity

The term "justice" should not be confused with "charity." Justice, unlike charity, is the province of the state. Justice is blind. It guards the property and protects the life of all alike. It does not discriminate between people. The economic status, religion, color, or personality of the individual is of no concern to justice. Justice is the execution of the law which treats all men equally. In its exercise the state has the monopoly of the use of force. The one who resorts to violence of one kind or another in his dealings with his fellow men: the murderer, the

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thief, or the contract breaker, is the recipient of the justice wielded by the power of the state. The state has the power of the sword to execute justice.

Some feel that this idea of justice is a cold, heartless concept. They want the state to produce social and economic justice as well. They want justice to include a more equal distribution of the goods of this world. They want charity and sympathy to be effected by the power of the law. In the process of broadening the meaning of justice to include these political activities, real justice is destroyed. The use of force to take from some to give to others is the very opposite of justice. Economic equality or economic redistribution cannot be effected by force apart from an unequal, and thus unjust, treatment of individual citizens. When this becomes the policy of the state, justice no longer prevails. The adjective "social" destroys the noun "justice."

Nor may the concept of justice be broadened to include a just price or wage. Economic remuneration is not given on the basis of the intrinsic worth of a person but rather on the basis of a man's evaluation of the specific services rendered by another. This subjective evaluation may differ widely in individuals. One writer describes a contributor to THE FREEMAN as the world's outstanding economist, while another thinks the contributors to this journal expound the cause of a decadent liberalism. It is not a matter of injustice that consumers evaluate a vulgar Hollywood production more highly than a work of fine art, or the comic sheets than the works of Shakespeare. This lies within the realm of subjective value judgments and tastes which are not the province of the state or of justice to regulate. When the state determines the economic remuneration of its citizens through control of prices, wages, and other means, this remuneration usually favors those who support the regime. This is not justice but legal plunder.

The Restricted Use of Force

Contrary to popular opinion, it is only by restricting the state to the administration of justice and the securing of individual liberty that proper scope can be given to social concerns. When the state takes over the sphere of charity and seeks to replace personal love and sympathy with impersonal, mechanical redistribution by force, the individual and voluntary associations of individuals are no longer able properly to fulfill their religious obligation in this sphere. When the financial and medical care of our aging parents

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becomes a matter of supporting them by taxes from everybody with a large fee removed for administration costs in the process, it becomes increasingly difficult for children to show filial love and care for their parents in obedience to the divine injunction. When excessive taxes are used to support the advance of socialism in Africa and South America through our government-to-government foreign aid, the individual is deprived of a considerable amount of his means for the voluntary support of charity. Private colleges and schools, hospitals, and other works of philanthropy and charity suffer as a result.

When the state assumes the task of promoting social justice, it leads to conflict on the part of various groups and individuals to get their hands on this "economic justice." Subsidies are disbursed in terms of political power; seldom is there concern with the character of the individual recipient. Voluntary charity, on the other hand, is highly discriminating. While charity may be given to those whose plight is the result of their own dissipation, folly, or sin, yet it is usually given with care and from a personal knowledge of the circumstances of the individual recipient. Private charity tends to encourage thrift and virtue while distribution by the power of the state, as is becoming ever more evident, encourages vice and indolence. Why should a man seek a job when he can receive sufficient relief from the government while unemployed? Why should mothers of illegitimate children change their habits when they are paid in proportion to the number of offspring they bear and all stigma is removed? The distribution by force leads to the idea on the part of the recipient that what he gets is his due. W. G. Sumner has well said:

> The yearning after equality is the offspring of envy and covetousness, and there is no possible plan for satisfying that yearning which can do aught else than rob A to give to B; consequently, all such plans nourish some of the meanest vices of human nature, waste capital, and overthrow civilization.[2]

Hope for the Oppressed

Only when the state is restricted to the administration of justice, and economic creativity thus freed from arbitrary restraints, will conditions exist for making possible a lasting improvement in the welfare of the more miserable peoples of the world. It is often this very lack of justice in the poorer countries that keeps the people in their low economic

[2] William Graham Sumner. *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton, 1952), p. 145.

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state. An English economic advisor to an African state was shocked at the prevalent low wages and succeeded in securing a minimum wage law for the land. The result was that thousands of workers who had earned forty to fifty cents a day were put out of work. Only the more efficient and essential workers remained and the whole economy suffered. It had been interventions in the market by the government, a lack of justice, that had kept the wages down in the first place by preventing capital accumulation and investment. Further intervention, in the form of the minimum wage law, only aggravated the situation, removing the one chance many had for some economic improvement. Were justice present in these lands, there would be no shortage of investment capital, for there would then be no fear of unjust confiscation or nationalization. Justice is the one condition that will lead to economic improvement. Where there is little justice, there is little charity. Only where there is justice and freedom will there be the opportunity for extensive charity.

When seen in its proper light, it is genuine social concern, sympathy for the less fortunate, and love for his fellow man that prompts the advocate of limited government to seek to restrict the state to the province of justice. It is because he realizes that the only true and adequate charity, fraternity, or social help springs from individual loving concern for another that he wants this sphere free from political control. He opposes the concept of social justice because he wants true justice and because he wishes to see economic and social improvement in the world. He is convinced that economic improvement cannot be effected by coercive redistribution but will follow justice and freedom. He recognizes that charity and fraternity cannot be legislated; to attempt to do so is to destroy them. It is because of his concern for justice as well as his concern for social improvement that he objects to the distortion involved in the concept of social justice. He agrees with the words of Frederic Bastiat:

> Governments never take any action which does not rest upon the sanction of force. Now, it is permissible to compel a person to be just, but not to force him to be charitable. The law, when it seeks to get action by force where morality brings it about by persuasion, far from elevating itself into the domain of Charity, falls into the field of Spoliation. . . .
>
> The proper domain of law and of government is justice.[3] ◈

[3] Frederic Bastiat, "Justice and Fraternity," first published in the *Journal des Economistes*, Paris, June, 1848.

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A Message to Garcia

ELBERT HUBBARD

IN ALL this Cuban business [1898-99] there is one man stands out on the horizon of my memory like Mars at perihelion.

When war broke out between Spain and the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses of Cuba – no one knew where. No mail or telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his cooperation, and quickly.

What to do!

Someone said to the President, "There is a fellow by the name of Rowan [Lt. Andrew S. Rowan, U.S. Army] will find Garcia for you, if anybody can."

Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How the "fellow by the name of Rowan" took the letter, sealed it up in an oilskin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out on the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia – are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail. The point that I wish to make is this: McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, "Where is he at?"

By the Eternal! there is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college of the land. It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause them

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Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915) was lost with the "Lusitania," but his works live on. As timely today as when first published in the March, 1899 edition of his magazine, *The Philistine*, "A Message to Garcia" bears reprinting once more.

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to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies: do the thing – "Carry a message to Garcia."

General Garcia is dead now, but there are other Garcias. No man who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well-nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man – the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a thing and do it.

Slipshod assistance, foolish inattention, dowdy indifference, and half-hearted work seem the rule: and no man succeeds, unless by hook or crook or threat he forces or bribes other men to assist him; or mayhap, God in His goodness performs a miracle, and sends him an Angel of Light for an assistant.

You, reader, put this matter to a test: You are sitting now in your office – six clerks are within call. Summon any one and make this request: "Please look in the encyclopedia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Correggio."

Will the clerk quietly say, "Yes, sir," and go do the task?

On your life he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye and ask one or more of the following questions:

Who was he?
Which encyclopedia?
Where is the encyclopedia?
Was I hired for that?
Don't you mean Bismarck?
What's the matter with Charlie doing it?
Is he dead?
Is there any hurry?
Sha'n't I bring you the book and let you look it up for yourself?
What do you want to know for?

And I will lay you ten to one that after you have answered the questions, and explained how to find the information, and why you want it, the clerk will go off and get one of the other clerks to help him try to find Garcia – and then come back and tell you there is no such man. Of course I may lose my bet, but according to the Law of Averages I will not.

Now, if you are wise, you will not bother to explain to your "assistant" that Correggio is indexed under the C's, not in the K's, but you will smile very sweetly and say, "Never mind," and go look it up yourself. And this incapacity for independent action, this moral stupidity, this infirmity of the will, this unwillingness to cheerfully catch hold and lift – these are the things that put pure socialism so far into the future. If men will not act for themselves, what will they do when the benefit of their effort is for all?

A first mate with knotted club seems necessary; and the dread of getting "the bounce" Saturday

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night holds many a worker in his place. Advertise for a stenographer, and nine out of ten who apply can neither spell nor punctuate – and do not think it necessary to.

Can such a one write a letter to Garcia?

"You see that bookkeeper," said the foreman to me in a large factory.

"Yes; what about him?"

"Well, he's a fine accountant, but if I'd send him up town on an errand, he might accomplish the errand all right and on the other hand, might stop at four saloons on the way, and when he got to Main Street would forget what he had been sent for."

Can such a man be entrusted to carry a message to Garcia?

We have recently been hearing much maudlin sympathy expressed for the "downtrodden denizens of the sweatshop" and the "homeless wanderer searching for honest employment," and with it all often go many hard words for the men in power.

Nothing is said about the employer who grows old before his time in a vain attempt to get frowsy ne'er-do-wells to do intelligent work; and his long, patient striving after "help" that does nothing but loaf when his back is turned. In every store and factory there is a constant weeding-out process going on. The employer is constantly sending away "help" that have shown their incapacity to further the interests of the business, and others are being taken on. No matter how good times are, this sorting continues: only, if times are hard and work is scarce, the sorting is done finer – but out and forever out the incompetent and unworthy go. It is the survival of the fittest. Self-interest prompts every employer to keep the best – those who can carry a message to Garcia.

I know one man of really brilliant parts who has not the ability to manage a business of his own, and yet who is absolutely worthless to anyone else, because he carries with him constantly the insane suspicion that his employer is oppressing, or intending to oppress, him. He cannot give orders, and he will not receive them. Should a message be given him to take to Garcia, his answer would probably be, "Take it yourself!"

Tonight this man walks the streets looking for work, the wind whistling through his threadbare coat. No one who knows him dare employ him, for he is a regular firebrand of discontent. He is impervious to reason, and the only thing that can impress him is the toe of a thick-soled Number Nine boot.

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Of course, I know that one so morally deformed is no less to be pitied than a physical cripple; but in our pitying let us drop a tear, too, for the men who are striving to carry on a great enterprise, whose working hours are not limited by the whistle, and whose hair is fast turning white through the struggle to hold in line dowdy indifference, slipshod imbecility, and the heartless ingratitude which, but for their enterprise, would be both hungry and homeless.

Have I put the matter too strongly? Possibly I have; but when all the world has gone a-slumming, I wish to speak a word of sympathy for the man who succeeds – the man who, against great odds, has directed the efforts of others, and having succeeded, finds there's nothing in it: nothing but board and clothes. I have carried a dinner-pail and worked for a day's wages, and I have also been an employer of labor, and I know there is something to be said of both sides. There is no excellence, per se, in poverty; rags are no recommendation; and all employers are not rapacious and high-handed, any more than all poor men are virtuous. My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the "boss" is away, as well as when he is at home. And the man who, when given a letter to Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking any idiotic questions, and with no lurking intention of chucking it into the nearest sewer, or of doing aught else but deliver it, never gets "laid off," nor has to go on a strike for higher wages. Civilization is one long, anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks shall be granted. He is wanted in every city, town, and village – in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such; he is needed, and needed badly – the man who can "Carry a Message to Garcia." ◈

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Social Consequences

ONE OF THE TRAGEDIES of the day is that in the name of social security we are developing a moral decay in our future citizens who are being taught the entitlement attitude of: "Regardless of what I do, I'm to be taken care of." This reminds one of the saying now going the rounds, "God helps those who help themselves and the government takes care of the rest."

RALPH E. LYNE, Taylor, Michigan

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Teachers

JAMES D. KOERNER calls his book *The Miseducation of American Teachers* (Houghton Mifflin, $4.95). The title is not quite apt, for Mr. Koerner is not aiming his shafts at the parochial schools on the one hand, or the many secular private institutions on the other. They have teachers who are both scholarly and literate. Indeed, by implication or inference (or both together), Mr. Koerner's indictment of the public schools amounts to a brief for private schools.

True enough, Mr. Koerner does profess to hold out some hope that the worst ravages of the "educationists" who now control the major power centers in the American public school system will be overcome. But the bulk of the book is so steeped in pessimistic reporting that one wonders about the nature of Mr. Koerner's trust in a saving remnant consisting of a "handful of independent-minded school boards in each state."

The reason for deriving a pessimistic conclusion from Mr. Koerner's exceedingly well-documented study is that the "revolution" of the past thirty years has become an entrenched orthodoxy on practically every level of influence and control. The teachers' colleges, stuffed with dull and repetitive courses in "method," grind out the annual crop of neophyte instructors who have only a halting command of the subject matter they are supposed to impart to their future students. Presumably an intelligent neophyte could go on to get up his chosen specialty for himself. But brainy lads and lasses are repelled by the teachers' college curricula in the first place, and the

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few lively individuals who put up with their "miseducation" just to get coveted jobs soon discover that they are expected to take more dreary courses in nothingness just to qualify for salary raises. There is no time to read Elizabethan drama or critiques of Keynesian economics in a "progressive" school system that puts its stress on conforming to "educationist" theory.

Even if the bright teacher resists, he finds that he is compelled more or less to use the texts and the methods prescribed by an Administration that is itself a product of the orthodoxy. And so things go from bad to worse as enthusiasm is killed.

Educational Jargon

Mr. Koerner's book, when it consists of the author's own prose, is sparkling. But, as befits a good reporter, Mr. Koerner has included many examples of the stuff he is inveighing against, which means that the book has its long dull stretches. Sometimes the quotations from "educanto" or "educationese" are unconsciously funny. There is, for example, the list of dissertations on page 187. The Ph.D. or the Ed.D. in Education has actually been awarded to people for grinding out wordage on such topics as "A Performance Analysis of the Propulsive Force of the Flutter Kick," or "The High School Student's Perception of Most-Liked and Least-Liked Television Figures," or "A Study of Little League Baseball and Its Educational Implications." But the fact that such stuff is not offered as parody material for college comic magazines soon causes the reader to wipe the smile off his face. And when Mr. Koerner piles up his examples of the lingua franca of the educationist in his "L'Envoi" chapter, the humor is quickly buried under the weight of what is listed as "the extended cliché," or "the enervating fugue," or "the forward passive," or "the grandiloquent bromide," or "the jargonized pyrotechny." The "educantoids" who write "educanto" are masters of meaningless sentences about "meaningfulness" and unstructured paragraphs about "structures." A teacher is never a teacher; he is a "critical inquirer," or a "director of experiences," or a "producer of effects," or a "motivator," or a "creator of learnings environments," or a "substitute parent."

Naturally the textbooks written by the educationists are themselves filled with enervating fugues and grandiloquent bromides. And the textbooks publishers, who might be willing to commission a few masters of clear, simple English to write texts, are stymied,

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for how could an educantoid recognize a first-rate product if he saw it?

Is There No Hope?

Sterling M. McMurrin, former U. S. Commissioner of Education, says in an introduction to Mr. Koerner's book that there are "teachers of high ability and good education" in our school system, but Mr. Koerner is primarily interested in drawing a generalized picture, not in isolating a few bright spots. For myself, I wish he had tried to single out a few points from which a counter-revolution in public education might just possibly be expected to take off. Are the "teachers of high ability and good education" inevitably bound to be suffocated by the dreary orthodoxy that surrounds them?

Take Carl Hansen, the superintendent of the Washington, D.C., school system, for example. Not so long ago Dr. Hansen started an experiment in "basic education" in the Amidon School. The idea was to restore some of the old-fashioned teaching methods of the pre-Deweyite day in a desegrated school of mixed I.Q.'s drawn from various social and economic backgrounds. Reading, in the first and second Amidon grades, has been taught by phonovisual chart methods that include a heavy dose of old-fashioned phonics; "social studies" have been sidetracked in favor of courses in history and geography. Dr. Hansen insists that the Amidon experiment has been a huge success – and he is now extending the "basic education" counter-revolution to other Washington schools.

In NEA's Backyard

Since Dr. Hansen's office is only a stone's throw from the Washington headquarters of the National Education Association, which is the stronghold of everything that Mr. Koerner detests, I have often wondered how the Amidon experiment in counter-revolution was ever permitted to get under way. When Dr. Hansen substitutes Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Robert Louis Stevenson and Robert Frost for the usual "Dick and Jane" drivel as prescribed classroom reading, why don't the educantoids descend on him in a body and ride him out of the District of Columbia on a rail? I'd like to know Mr. Koerner's answer to this question.

Again, the new head of Teachers College at Columbia in New York City insists that the proportion between "method" and "content" courses in the various teachers colleges is changing. A prospective French teacher pre-

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sumably can take more semester hours in languages and fewer hours in "how to teach" redundancy. Has this shift gone far enough to make an appreciable difference?

To take one other example, there is the town of Weston in my home state of Connecticut. Some of the kids in the Weston primary school were having trouble learning to read by the Deweyite "look-and-say" or "whole word recognition" method. The "independent-minded" school board of Weston decided that reading delinquency had gone far enough, and accordingly it hired Mrs. Hamilton Basso, the wife of the novelist, to make remedial recommendations. Old-fashioned phonics were restored to the Weston primary grades on Mrs. Basso's advice.

Do examples such as the foregoing constitute much ground for hope? I'd like to hear more from Mr. Koerner on this. ◈

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SAMUEL SMILES, *Self-Help*

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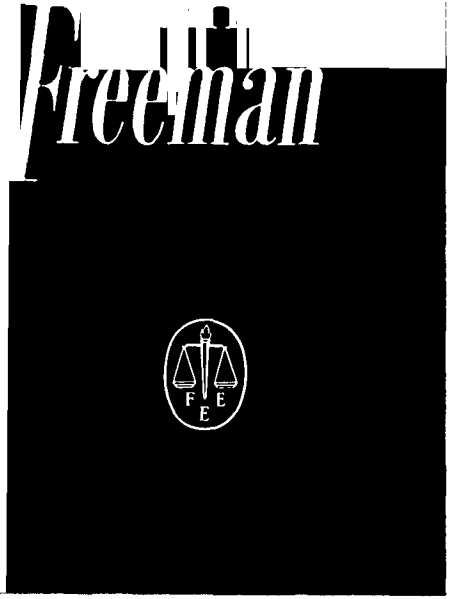

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